

4402
R Steinmett (S.) 185
A

C H A R G E
A N D
S E R M O N,
TOGETHER WITH AN
INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE
A N D
CONFESSION of FAITH,
Delivered at the
O R D I N A T I O N
O F T H E

Rev. Mr. C A L E B E V A N S,
August 18, 1767, in Broad-Mead, Bristol.

Published at the request of the church, and the ministers then present.

• The SECOND EDITION. corrected,
With an A P P E N D I X,
Occasion'd by the Rev. Mr. *Harwood's* Letter.

B R I S T O L:

Printed and Sold by S. FARLEY, in *Castle-Green*; sold
also by J. BUCKLAND, in *Pater-noster-Row*, and G.
KEITH, in *Gracechurch street, London, 1767.*

(Price ONE SHILLING.)

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE solemn service of the day was open'd by the Rev. Mr. Francis, who read some suitable portions of scripture and then prayed.

The Rev. Mr. Day succeeded in prayer.

The Rev. Mr. Hugh Evans introduced the ordination, and together with the other ministers engaged, laid hands on his son and prayed over him.

The Rev. Dr. Stennet gave the charge.

The Rev. Mr. Ash prayed.

The Rev. Mr. Tommas preached.

The Rev. Mr. Fuller concluded the solemnity with prayer.



INTRODUCTION.

IT is, my honored friends, with the utmost gratitude and, I trust, the deepest humility, I address you on this very solemn, and yet, on many accounts, very joyful occasion. And in the language of the greatest of earthly kings, I am ready with holy transport to cry out, *And will God in very deed dwell with men on earth?*

THAT the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity should hold converse with *creatures*, even the most exalted, but especially with *man*, *sinful man*, how condescending! That after his most shameful apostacy and unprovoked rebellion against his maker and generous benefactor, he should nevertheless

A

entertain thoughts of love towards him, and in his infinite wisdom and mercy should find out and establish a most glorious method to restore and save him : this surely is grace that no words can fully express, or thoughts the most enlarged comprehend.— If we reflect, moreover, with the least attention on the astonishing plan of salvation, in which all the divine perfections are so illustriously displayed, and recollect at the same time the distinguishing mercy shewn to *us* of these kingdoms in bringing the gospel amongst us, restoring it when almost lost, and continuing and succeeding it in spite of all the opposition made to it's progress ; how can we help crying out with holy surprize, *What hath the Lord wrought !* and, *behold what manner of love !*— If we advance in our reflections on the divine goodness, in raising to himself hereby a glorious church out of the ruins of the fall, and in planting that truly noble vine in this barren soil, and preserving it by a train of gracious miracles from generation to generation, notwithstanding the unwearied ef-

forts of earth and hell to extirpate and destroy it, our astonishment rises still higher. — Should we add to this, his special kindness in bringing the gospel into this city, and establishing christian societies in the midst of us, there appears yet higher cause for the exercise of gratitude and love. — If we further reflect on the divine care in raising up from age to age able ministers of the New Testament, to go in and out before his people, and to break the bread of life unto them : and if we particularly of this community, attend to the divine goodness in so amply providing for us amidst many and great revolutions, and not suffering us after the death of our late truly honored pastor, to fall into intestine broils and contentions, and so to be consumed one of another, but keeping us in perfect peace and mutual love, and sending us, we trust, in answer to our prayers, a minister of his own choosing and qualifying, a workman that need not be ashamed : — What reason have we to cry out, *Bless the Lord O our souls, and all*

that is within us blefs his holy name ! Wherefore O Lord is this unto us ?

FOR my own part, I esteem it my greatest honor and happiness to have been for so many years connected with you, and especially to serve you in the gospel of CHRIST. And to have a son in any measure capable, and also willing to serve you in the same important work ; and that after upwards of eight years service amongst you, he should meet with your unanimous approbation, and be cordially invited to accept of office-power amongst you,—fills me with unutterable pleasure. Greater joy I cannot have.

AND now that we may proceed with regularity in the solemnity before us, let me desire you that are the members of this church to recognize your call of my son *Caleb Evans* to the office of an ELDER in this society, by holding up the right hand.

Which was accordingly done.

You are now, my son, to signify your acceptance of this our invitation.

Which was express'd in the following terms.

I ESTEEM it the highest honor and the greatest happiness of my life, that I have been, I trust, counted faithful and put into the ministry by JESUS my great master. And to receive such a public testimonial as is now given me, of the approbation and love of this antient and truly respectable society, after having served them in the gospel for more than eight years, yields me a satisfaction I am unable to describe. I cannot indeed but tremble when I reflect upon my own weakness and unworthiness, and scarcely know how to go on in the work in which I am engag'd, much less to enlarge the sphere of it. But yet when I consider the encouragements I have from my divine master, who hath said my grace is sufficient for you, and lo I am with you alway even to the end of the world ; and the affection shewn me by this society, as well as the acceptableness, and, I hope, usefulness of my labors amongst them ; ---I dare not decline the call so unanimously given me, but feel myself under a kind of necessity to accept of it. And, in the fear of

GOD, therefore, I do accept of it ; as I have before signified in a more private manner, and which I now thus publicly recognize.---And it is my fixed resolution in the strength of divine grace, diligently, faithfully, and fervently to discharge the duties of my sacred office, and in every respect to watch for souls as one that knows he must give an account, and earnestly hopes to do it with joy and not with grief. Brethren, pray for me.

As it has been customary on such occasions as these, for the person to be ordained previously to give a summary account of his faith, I make no doubt but you my son are willing to comply with this laudable custom, and are neither afraid nor ashamed to declare your religious sentiments in the presence of this numerous assembly ; which you are now desired to do.

Here, the Confession of Faith was deliver'd which is herewith published.

HAVING signified your acceptance of the invitation given you, and deliver'd a confession of your faith that is I am persuaded greatly to the satisfaction of the society to

which you stand related, as well as of us your brethren in the ministry ; what now remains is solemnly to set you apart to the office you have undertaken.

THAT it is indeed the sole prerogative of an ascended JESUS, to give such gifts unto men as are necessary effectually to *qualify* them for the work of the ministry ; that it is moreover the province of every separate congregation to look out from amongst them for such persons as appear to be thus qualified and to prove their gifts, and when prov'd to *call* them to the exercise of them as providence may direct ; and further, that it is the undoubted right of every christian church *freely to choose her own officers* ;—I am very sensible, and most readily acknowledge. But that it is the peculiar province of Pastors and Elders to *ordain* or *set apart* such persons to the office to which they are call'd, to me seems equally evident. Thus in Acts vi. 1, 2, and following verses, we read that the apostles, when the number of the disciples was mul-

tiplied so that they could not manage their secular as well as spiritual concerns without some assistance, directed the church at *Jerusalem* to look out from amongst themselves proper persons who should have the care of their temporal affairs; which accordingly they did, and when they had done it, *they set these persons before the apostles* to be ordained or appointed to that business. So likewise in *Act xiii. 12*, the prophets and teachers that were in the church at *Antioch*, were ordered we read by the Holy Ghost to separate *Barnabas* and *Saul* to the work whereunto he had called them; which they did accordingly. And the apostle *Paul* writing to *Titus*, chap. i. ver. 5, says to him—*for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that be wanting, and ordain Elders in every city.*

'Tis true indeed what was properly apostolic, ceased with the apostles. But from the passages above-mentioned 'tis evident the work of ordination was not confin'd to the apostles, but was perform'd by other

and inferior ministers in the church of CHRIST; and there seems to be therefore no reason why the same practice should not be continued still. The church still needs and has different officers, and what better method can we take to introduce such persons into their respective offices, than that pointed out to us by the practice of the apostles and primitive ministers in the church of CHRIST? A method well calculated to preserve order and decency in the church of GOD, and to keep disorderly and unqualified men from imposing themselves on the churches; and which does by no means interfere with any of their rights and privileges.

I WOULD further observe that in setting persons apart to any sacred office, it has been customary to make use of *fasting, prayer* and *imposition of hands*. And tho' we pretend not by the imposition of our hands to convey any extraordinary gifts, yet as this rite in the business of ordination was evidently us'd in the apostolic age, where no

extraordinary gifts appear to have been communicated by it, as in the ordination of deacons and of *Barnabus* and *Saul* before referr'd to, who were all men full of the Holy Ghost before they were ordain'd ; we think ourselves justified in following the example of the apostles in the use of this rite as well as in fasting and prayer ; and shall now therefore attend to the solemnity before us, according to what we apprehend to be the primitive pattern.



CONFESSION

A

CONFESSIO*N* of FAITH,

DELIVERED AT HIS

ORDINATION

B Y

CALEB EVANS.



5

CONFESSION, &c.

THE right of private judgment, especially in matters of religion, I apprehend is the undoubted and unalienable privilege of every rational intelligent creature. It is a privilege I claim myself, and for the use of which I am accountable only to God; and it is a privilege which I think every one *ought* to exercise, and has a right *fully* and *freely* to enjoy. Nor can I think this privilege is in any measure infring'd by the request now made on the behalf of this society, that I would give a free confession of my faith upon this occasion. The members of this community have undoubtedly a right to think for themselves, as well

as I have to think for myself. And as there are various doctrines, which, tho' decried by many professing christians, *they* judge to be the very essentials of the gospel, and of the greatest importance to their present and everlasting welfare ; it is certainly incumbent upon them to be well satisfied that the person they chuse to minister to them is well acquainted with these doctrines, and establish'd in the belief of them : for how can two walk together except they be agreed ? —Indeed, if the people are to think freely for themselves as well as a minister for himself, how can it be suppos'd *possible* in the very nature of things, they should voluntarily chuse a minister who appears to be either ignorant of, or an enemy to those principles, which they esteem sacred and infinitely important. 'Tis easy to *talk* about charity, and 'tis much more amiable to exercise it upon every fit object and occasion ; but what I have just mentioned, let our charity be ever so diffusive, cannot be. As well might we suppose a protestant society to chuse a popish instructor, or a popish

society to chuse a mahometan one. And if a religious community have a right to make *any* enquiry into the faith of him they chuse for a minister, they have certainly a right to make all the enquiry they judge to be of importance to their general peace and welfare : nor can a minister have any right to impose himself upon a people without giving them such satisfaction as they judge reasonable with respect to his faith, any more than a people have a right to impose their faith upon a minister. And though it be pretended that by a minister's being refused by a society, and consequently being shut out from the emoluments of that society, he is embarrass'd and his freedom of enquiry obstructed; yet surely no just cause of complaint can arise from hence, unless it be prov'd reasonable, that in order to preserve entire the freedom of enquiry to a minister, you should *take away* this freedom from the people. And if this be reasonable, then all the absurdities of *Rome* itself, the faith of whose votaries is at the disposal of her priests, may be prov'd to be reason-

able too. Nay, if this be reasonable, then a minister ought to be retain'd and supported by a society, tho' in consequence of his free enquiries he should happen to be a deist, since upon these principles, if a society do not retain and support such a minister, they are enemies to free-enquiry and the liberty of private judgment. Nor is it by any means sufficient that a minister declare his belief of the bible in general, since this is a declaration which a papist will make as well as a protestant, the greatest enemy to the doctrines of the gospel, as well as the most zealous friend of them. And though, after the fullest confession of faith it is *possible*, shocking it is to think that it should be possible for a minister to impose upon a people and to declare he believes what he really does not believe, pretending in private that he assents to such and such articles of faith, because made terms of his admission by the people, and as articles of peace, not of belief; yet still there is no more reason upon this account to abolish the custom of a minister's giving a confes-

sion of his faith previous to his ordination, than there is in civil matters to abolish the use of all kinds of promises or oaths, because they are, it is well known, grossly abus'd by many, and the force of them evaded.

AND, as it is not possible for a conscientious people to make choice of a minister, without being satisfied in what they apprehend to be the soundness of his faith, as well as the purity of his morals ; so it does not seem consistent for any conscientious ministers to join in the ordination of another minister, without having the like satisfaction. For if a person that is proposed for ordination be so erroneous in his principles or so defective in his morals, that in the judgment of those who are desired to ordain him, he is likely rather to hurt and injure than serve and promote the cause of CHRIST and immortal souls—how can they with any propriety or conscientiously join in his ordination ? It is as absurd and inconsistent to suppose it, as it would be to

suppose they could with propriety and conscientiously declare their *approbation* of a person whom, at the same time, they greatly *disapprove*. And notwithstanding all the specious and plausible things which are said in favour of such inconsistency, this I will venture to affirm is an absolute contradiction in nature.

I AM very sensible it is become now quite fashionable, zealously and indiscriminately to decry all creeds and systematic confessions of faith, and vehemently to inveigh against them, as invading the liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made us free. But it is very easy to see that the grand rock of offence with these specious declaimers is not *any* creed or system, for they have all some creed or system of their own, and are often not a little sanguine in defence of it; but it is that particular system of faith which has long been and still is the bulwark and glory of the reformation, which is the object of their aversion, and to destroy which they seem determined to leave no artifice

entry'd. But great is the truth and it will prevail. And from what has been suggested, it is I think very evident that a minister's giving a confession of his faith previous to his ordination, is so far from interfering with the right of private judgment, notwithstanding all the florid declamations to the contrary, that it is rather on the other hand a necessary *consequence* of the natural exercise of this right, betwixt a minister and the people to whom he is called to minister.

I HAVE taken the liberty of mentioning these things upon this solemn occasion, thus publicly to vindicate this society from every unjust aspersiion that may be thrown upon them, on account of the request they have made that I would now give them a free confession of my faith; as well as to vindicate myself in complying with this request: which by the help of God, I will now do with the utmost freedom and cheerfulness. For tho' it cannot be suppos'd my christian friends of this society, amongst

whom I have labored in the gospel for more than eight years and by whose invitation I am now come to be ordained, are strangers to my religious principles ; yet I judge it highly reasonable to make a public declaration of them upon this occasion, not only to demonstrate my readiness to give them all the satisfaction they can desire in an affair so important, but also to manifest in this open manner *their* steady and uniform regard as well as *my own* hearty attachment to those important truths of the everlasting gospel, which alas ! to too many in the present day, are a stumbling block or foolishness.

BLESSED be GOD I am not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST ; and why then should I be afraid or ashamed publicly to declare what appears to me to be the sum and substance of it ? Ashamed ! —no—* *God forbid I should glory save in the cross of Christ,* by whom the world and all its scoffs and reproaches are I trust crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

* Gal. vi. 14.

IN the presence therefore of the great heart searching God and of this numerous congregation, I confess my cordial belief of the following doctrines; which clearly appear to me after mature and deliberate consideration, to be a summary of the faith which is delivered to the saints in God's most holy word, and which it is my duty therefore * *to hold fast*.

THE basis of all religion is the Being of a God. I begin therefore with declaring my firm belief of this great and important truth,—*That there is a God*.

SURROUNDED as I am on every side with numberless displays of infinite wisdom power love and other perfections; beholding those stupendous luminaries the sun the moon and the stars above me; the earth with all its rich and endless variety of trees plants herbs fruits and flowers beneath me; surveying moreover the numerous tribes of beings in the air and in the water, in the fo-

* 2 Tim. i. 13.

rest and in the field, in the smallest of which I see a world of wonders ; and especially contemplating my own existence, the amazing powers of this organized material body, and the yet more amazing faculties of the active spirit that is lodged within ; — conviction of the Being of a God flashes upon my mind, with evidence and demonstration almighty and irresistible. By such a stupendous chain of effects, I am constrained to ascend to a first original cause, and could as soon cease to be, as cease to believe that there is a God. The unity and the peculiar perfections and attributes, such as the eternity, immutability, omniscience, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, of this great first unoriginated self-existent Being whom we call God, are in some measure almost as demonstrable as his existence, from the various and wonderful works of his hands : all which do with a loud voice proclaim his * *eternal power and godhead.*

* Rom. i. 20.

BUT the clearest discoveries we have of the Divine Being are I apprehend in the written revelation he has himself graciously given us in his *holy word*.

WHATEVER may be discoverable by the light of nature, that God should see fit to give mankind a written revelation is not only possible, but I apprehend from the goodness of God and the manifest advantages resulting from such a revelation, is highly probable; and that he has done so, and that this revelation is contain'd in the books of the Old and New Testament, I firmly believe. Such are the external and internal proofs of the divine authority of these writings, arising from the characters of their penmen, the uncontroul'd miracles which were wrought in their confirmation, the unquestionable truth of the grand leading facts related in them, the exact fulfilment of the prophecies they contain, particularly those respecting the Messiah, and I had almost said above all, from the holy nature design and tendency of them;—

that unless I were to indulge the most unreasonable infidelity, I must acknowledge they are divine. They are worthy of God, they bear upon them his impress, and I firmly believe therefore were *inspir'd* by him. Accordingly I receive this sacred volume with humility gratitude and love, as containing the lively oracles of God; I prize it as a gift of inestimable value and importance; and cannot but esteem it my indispensable duty implicitly to submit to it in all things of a religious nature, and to make it the only standard both of my faith and manners. And it is because I am fully satisfied the following principles are deriv'd from this pure fountain of unadulterated truth, that I cordially embrace them as articles of my faith, and the foundation of my hope and comfort.

To these sacred records I acknowledge myself indebted for the clearest and most satisfactory discoveries of the Divine Being. It is here I learn with certainty that there is but * *one God*, even he who is distinguish-

* 1 Cor. viii. 4.

ed by the appellation of the one living and true God, in opposition to the many false deities ador'd by the heathen ; it is here I am taught with the brightest evidence, that this one God is a Being of * *infinite rectitude, unspotted purity and holiness, and inflexible justice and truth*, as well as a God of immense power, knowledge, wisdom and love ; here I am made to understand that † *in the unity of the Godhead there are three divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, into whose name therefore we are commanded to be baptized, and who are all spoken of as possessing divine attributes, and partaking of divine honors, and consequently must be *one* in nature and essence, however inferior in office in the oeconomy of redemption, or there cannot be *but one* God. And as my bible teaches me these things concerning the Divine Being in the fullest and clearest manner, I firmly believe them, notwithstanding they surpass my narrow comprehension, as every thing relating to the Divine Being must necessarily do.

D

* Psal cxlv. 17. † Matt. xxviii. 29.

I further believe upon the same divine authority that * *in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them.* Amongst other creatures of his hand but greatly superior to them all except the angels, and but a *little* lower than this bright order of beings, *I believe he made man*; in the formation and structure of whose body and in the faculties of whose soul, he gave striking specimens of his exquisite skill and wisdom, as well as of almighty power and love. I believe that God created man in after or *according to his own image*, yea that in the moral and spiritual image of God created he him. I believe that when he had thus made man he constituted him lord of this lower creation, assign'd him the paradise of Eden for his pleasant abode, furnish'd it with a rich variety of every fruit that is good for food, and of every tree in the garden save one permitted him freely to eat; and then to consummate his happiness, gave him a fair beloved companion to share it with him. I believe that man

* Gen, chap. i, ii, iii,

being thus in honor abode not, but *fell from this high holy honorable and happy state in which he was created.* The great creator seeing fit in his infinite wisdom to constitute a certain tree in the garden call'd the tree of knowledge of good and evil as a positive test of the obedience or disobedience of his creature man, I believe that in opposition to his maker's express and positive command, and in defiance of the awful sanctions of it, he wilfully transgressed, and being left to the freedom of his own will, eat of the forbidden fruit, and thereby involv'd himself and his unborn posterity, in guilt depravity and ruin.—This doctrine of *original sin* as it is commonly called, or that Adam was not only the natural but also the federal head and representative of his offspring, and that we are all immersed therefore in the consequence of his disobedience, is so fully taught in the word of God as well as by daily experience, that I cannot but believe it. My bible tells me that * *by one man sin entered into the world, and death*

* Rom. v. 12, and following verses.

by sin, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned; that by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; that by the disobedience of one many are made sinners; that the whole world is become guilty before God, and that in Adam all die. My bible tells me also, that Adam after his fall * *begat a son in his own likeness, that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.* And indeed when I reflect upon the multiplicity of pains and sorrows and the various kinds of death to which I see innumerable infants daily exposed, notwithstanding they are personally innocent and have not sinned † *after the similitude of Adam's transgression*; I have no other way of accounting for so plain and flagrant a fact than that which my bible teaches me, which is that all these calamities flow from Adam's sin ‡ *in whom all have sinned*, or in the guilt of whose sin all must be involv'd or they would not share in the punishment. When I ob-

* Gen. v. iii. † Rom. v. 14. ‡ Rom. v. 12. John iii. 3. 6.

serve
discov
are c
of spi
lence
there
it im
unle
flow
for
ima
strai
The
tuti
two
on
cur
thi
pro
eve
fac
gal
in
it
ag

serve moreover the early propensities to sin discover'd by children as soon as ever they are capable of acting, the general disregard of spiritual and eternal things, the prevalence of vice in the world, and the remains there are of sin in the best of men; I find it impossible to deny universal depravity, unless I could suppose poisonous streams to flow from a pure fountain; yea and even for the honor of God himself in whose image man was at first made, I am constrained to acknowledge he is now fallen. The righteousness of this primitive constitution if we consider the natural union between Adam and his posterity, the perfection of his nature, and the advantageous circumstances in which he was placed, is I think very apparent and cannot with any propriety be disputed. Though if it was ever so difficult to account for it, 'till the fact itself, which is in my opinion irrefragable, can be overthrown, it seems highly indecent to make vehement outcries against it, lest we should be found fighting even against God.

I FURTHER believe upon divine authority, that from all eternity GOD out of his mere good pleasure and to display the riches of his sovereign grace and mercy, foreseeing the fall of man, *graciously determined to rescue a certain number of this apostate race from the ruins of the fall, and to raise them to all the privileges of the sons of God:* whilst at the same time in his awful justice and righteousness he suffered *all* the angels that fell to perish in their disobedience. * *He took not hold of the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham.*—That all mankind are justly expos'd to eternal ruin, and have not the least meritorious claim to the divine favor, is necessarily supposed from the repeated assurances we have that the provision made for the recovery of any of them is the effect of mere grace and mercy. That the great God has a sovereign undoubted right to dispense his free favors to whom and in what manner and degree he pleases, must be allowed. That he ever has and still does actually exercise this sovereign prerogative in the

* Heb, ii. 16.

dispensation of the various blessings of nature providence and grace, giving to some one, to others five, and to others ten talents, is equally evident. That God could have actually saved all mankind in a perfect consistency with free agency had he seen fit so to do, but that all mankind are not actually saved; and that he could have granted the same exalted degree of spiritual privileges to all that he has to some, if this had been his pleasure, but that he has not; is indisputable. That he sends the gospel particularly to some places, and not to others, yea that he sent his son himself to * *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* and not to *Tyre* and *Sidon*, though he knew the inhabitants of *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* would not be brought to repentance thereby, and that the inhabitants of *Tyre* and *Sidon* would had they enjoy'd the same privileges, cannot be denied. These are stubborn facts, the evidence of which is irresistible. And what is there implied in these things less than the much abus'd and grossly misrepresented doctrine of

* Mat, xi, 21.

personal election, or the free and sovereign choice of a certain number of mankind to eternal life?—That the tender mercies of God are over all his works; that God is not the author of sin and does by no means exercise any positive influence leading men to sin; that no man shall be call'd to an account for the abuse of privileges he never enjoy'd, but shall have a most fair and equitable trial, and be condemned not by any arbitrary decree, but for the wilful violation of known duty, and so his condemnation be entirely of himself; that by the sovereign will and pleasure of God we are not to understand a capricious wanton display of power, but such a display of it as is perfectly consistent with the highest wisdom, and tends most to the furthering the noblest of all ends the glory of God; that all such as are chosen of God are chosen thro' sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and consequently are not at liberty to live as they list;—all these things are most readily allowed, and I abhor conclusions of a contrary nature, as much as

those who may violently charge them upon me as the necessary consequence of this doctrine. Nor are there in my apprehension any other difficulties attending this important truth, but such as arise from the foreknowledge of God, the introduction of moral evil into the world, and a particular providence; which yet we cannot deny without denying the plainest fact and almost commencing atheists. And with respect to the evidence of this truth arising from scripture, tis so plain and abundant, that one would think it impossible for any one to read the bible and overlook it. For there I read that CHRIST himself said, ** all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.* There I read that the saints the saved of the LORD, are such as are *† chosen to salvation according to the good pleasure of the divine will, and to the praise of the glory of his grace; that they are saved and called with an holy calling not*

** John vi. 37, 39. † Eph. i. 5, 6. Rom. viii. 29. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. i. 2.*

according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given in Christ before the world began ; that they are predestinated to be conform'd to the image of his son, and elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. I cannot therefore deny this doctrine, notwithstanding all the dreadful representations some men have presum'd to give of it, but am under a necessity of yielding a hearty assent to it, so bright and strong does the evidence appear to me by which it is confirm'd. And this is the important lesson I learn from it, that he who glorieth should glory only in the Lord, and that with the deepest humility every believer ought to say, by the grace of God I am what I am.

IN order to accomplish the purposes of divine love towards his apostate creatures, and in consequence of those counsels of peace which were from all eternity between the Father and the Son, I believe that in

the fulness of time *the Son of God became incarnate*, took upon him the lowly form of a servant, led a most useful amiable and meritorious life, yielding in all things a perfect obedience to the divine will, endur'd a most amazing conflict in the garden of Gethsemane, and at length in agonies expired upon the cross, as a vicarious *atoning* sacrifice for the sins of his chosen people; according to his own declaration, *I lay down my life for the sheep* *. I believe that on the third day he rose from the dead as a triumphant conqueror, and after having for a while convers'd with his disciples and given full proof of his resurrection, return'd again to heaven from whence he originally came, and where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. I believe that hereby the justice of God was fully satisfied, his holiness infinitely exalted, the malignity of sin inexpressibly magnified, and the divine compassion and love most amazingly and gloriously display'd. I believe that *the lord Jesus Christ is the alone meritorious and procuring cause of the whole of*

* John x. 15.

*salvation, that he is * made of God to all them that believe, wisdom righteousness sanctification and redemption, and that we are wash'd sanctified and justified, in the name or for the sake of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God. I believe that our persons and services are accepted only in him the beloved, and that all the blessings of grace and glory flow to us in and thro' him, who by the imputation therefore of his merits is the end of the law for righteousness, yea and all in all, to every one that believeth.*—This grand doctrine of the atonement and mediation of CHRIST and salvation through him alone, shines with such amazing lustre through the whole of the gospel revelation, and is so evidently the distinguishing doctrine contain'd in it; and it is moreover so impossible to account for the bloody sweat of the innocent redeemer in the garden, and his amazing language upon the cross, † *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*, unless we allow that the chastisement of our peace was upon him and that he suffer'd the just for the unjust;

* 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Cor. vi. 11. † Matt. xxvii. 46. Isai. liii. 5,

that with the bible in my hands I could as soon deny the existence of Jesus, as his vicarious atonement sacrifice and mediation. Nor can any doctrine be more worthy of God, however superior to our limited understandings. Here I see sin punish'd, all the perfections of Deity exalted, and the chief of sinners saved. Here I see mercy and truth, righteousness and peace embracing each other, and triumphing together. Here I see in the person of the great Immanuel, Deity and humanity, which sin had separated, reunited, and an effectual way opened for a like happy union between God and every believing soul. I receive therefore this glorious heart-cheering doctrine as well worthy of all acceptation, and am ready I trust to ** count all things but loss, so that I may but win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

I BELIEVE the absolute necessity of regeneration ; or that † *except a man be born again,*

** Phil. iii. 8, 9. † John iii. 3.*

pass under a spiritual divine change, has his understanding enlightened, his will renewed, and his affections spiritualized, and is brought to a spiritual knowledge faith and love of CHRIST and true holiness, *he cannot see the kingdom of God.* * *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, all old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new.* † And without holiness, i. e. without a real fervent prevailing love to God, and a cheerful obedience to his commands, let our principles and professions be what they will, we are most peremptorily assur'd *no man shall see the Lord.* I believe that the renewal of the heart, and the sanctification of our corrupt natures, are effected by the operations of the good spirit of God, and in and thro' or for the sake of the mediation of JESUS CHRIST. ‡ *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified,* says the apostle Paul, *as well as justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.* How the spirit of God performs this work I know not: but that it is in a perfect con-

* 2 Cor. v. 17. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ 1 Cor. vi 11

assency with the freedom of the will I firmly believe; for he * *worketh to will as well as to do, of his good pleasure.*

I BELIEVE moreover that where the work of grace is begun, † *it shall be carried on to the day of Christ*, and that the children of God shall be *kept by the mighty power of God thro' faith unto salvation.*

I FURTHER believe that as there are various means of grace which it is our duty diligently to attend, so there are especially two positive institutions which CHRIST has enjoyn'd upon all his followers, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper.*

Baptism is I believe being bathed or immers'd in water in the name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost, as an emblem of our being wash'd from sin and dying to it, and rising again to a new and holy life. † *For we are buried with Christ by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by*

* Phil. ii. 13. † Phil. i. 6. 1. Pet. i. 5.
† Rom. vi. 4.

*the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. A credible profession of faith and repentance are I believe the necessary qualifications for this ordinance, nor have we any authority to alter or dispense with them. * If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.*

THE *Lord's Supper* is an ordinance, wherein the devout receiving of the elements of bread and wine, is designed I believe to impress upon our hearts a deep and lively sense of the benefits resulting from the death of CHRIST, † *whose flesh is to every believer meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed* ‡ *This do in remembrance of me.*

I BELIEVE that as it is appointed for all men once to die, so at death the § *body returns to the dust from whence it was taken, and the spirit to God that gave it.* I believe that on the appointed day || *the trumpet shall sound, the graves be open'd, the dead rais'd, the judges enthron'd, the books unfolded, and that we shall*

* Acts viii. 37. † John vi. 55. ‡ Luke xxii. 19. § Eccles. xii. 7. || 1 Cor. xv. 52.

all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
 I believe that every impious mouth shall then be stopped, and that to all the habitually wicked impenitent and ungodly, who shall be plac'd on his left hand, he will most certainly say, and cause the equity of the sentence to be universally seen and acknowledged, * *depart from me ye cursed into everlasting burnings with the devil and his angels for ever.* But to them on his right hand who shall appear to be of a very different character, with smiles of infinite complacency and love he will graciously say, † *come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you ‡ from before the foundation of the world.* At the close of which solemn scene, those on the left hand of the judge *shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*

THESE are my distinguishing religious principles. These are the genuine sentiments of my heart, the power and energy

* Rom. xiv. 10. † Mat. xxv. 41. ‡ Mat. xxv. 34.

of which I hope I have in some measure felt, and earnestly desire more amply to experience. And these moreover are the grand doctrines I design to make the subject of my future ministrations—upon which I do myself, and hope you my friends will also, fervently implore the divine blessing.

I AM very sensible that many of these doctrines are quite opposite to the fashionable tenets of the present day. Nor shall I wonder whilst I profess to hold and presume to explain and recommend them, if I am sometimes branded with the odium of a weak head, and sometimes with the much greater reproach of a dishonest bad heart. But blessed be God I hope I can sincerely say, ** none of these things move me—and I desire not to count even my life dear to me, so that I may but finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus.*

CONSCIOUS however of my own imperfection weakness and fallibility, I desire always to keep my mind open to conviction;

† Acts xx. 24.

and I hope I shall never be suffered to keep back any part of what may appear to me to be the counsel of God.

NOR would I forget that 'tis my indispensable duty to hold the truth in love. And blessed be God I can solemnly declare from my inmost soul, that whatever differences there may be in sentiment betwixt real christians, owing to the imperfection of the present state and the various prejudices to which we are all liable, yet with the whole family of JESUS whatever be their denomination, with all that breathe his spirit and temper, and appear to have his image and superscription upon their souls, I feel my heart united. And most tenderly do I therefore salute them all, and you my friends of this society in a particular manner, as brethren in the LORD; whose welfare and happiness I fervently wish to promote, and with whom I hope to spend a blissful eternity, in those transporting regions where every mist and cloud of darkness shall be done away, and we shall all be light in the LORD!—Even so, Amen and Amen!



A
C H A R G E

DELIVERED AT THE
O R D I N A T I O N
O F T H E

Rev. Mr. C A L E B E V A N S.

August 18, 1767, in Broad-Mead, BRISTOL.

By SAMUEL STENNETT, D. D.



C H A R G E.

THE part assigned me in the solemn service of this day, is to exhort you, my brother, to the duties of that sacred office with which you are now invested. And I persuade myself, so intimate have been my connections with you and so great is my concern for your comfort and usefulness, that you will excuse the freedom with which I shall address you : and the rather as you will reflect that whilst I am speaking to you, Sir, I am speaking to myself. What may be offered to your consideration, I shall ground upon the words of the Apostle, and

those connected with them, which we have in

Acts xx. 19. SERVING THE LORD WITH ALL HUMILITY OF MIND, AND WITH MANY TEARS AND TEMPTATIONS.

EXAMPLE, it hath often been observed, hath a greater effect upon the minds of men in common than precept. It is therefore our happiness with regard to the duties of the ministerial office, as well as those of private christians, that as they are clearly laid down in the bible, so they are therein exemplified in many striking instances. The instance which now presents itself to our view, is no less an one than that of the apostle Paul. I am aware indeed that he sustained an extraordinary character in the church of God, that he was endowed with supernatural and miraculous gifts, and that he was called by providence to services of a far more arduous and extensive kind, than are expected from any of us; yet the account given us in this context of the man-

her in which he acquitted himself at Ephesus, the few years he spent there, is in the general very well fitted to be drawn into an example for our imitation. 'Tis true, the particular kind of trial which he there endured, and the prospect of martyrdom he had before him, are circumstances of a peculiar nature, and do not admit of any comparison: but the services he rendered to his master, and the manner in which he performed them, deserve our most diligent attention.

He was at this time upon a journey from certain places he had been visiting in Greece to Jerusalem. And not having time to take Ephesus in his way, he sends for the elders of the church there, to meet him at Miletus. This interview was solemn and affecting. For though the apostle knew not particularly what should befall him, yet he was very apprehensive that he should see their faces no more in the flesh. This opportunity therefore he takes, whilst he bad them a final adieu, and commended them to the

care and influence of divine grace ; to exhort them to their duty, and to urge them to it from the example he had set them, the few years he had been among them.

His exhortation we have in v. 28, *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. An exhortation he the rather presses upon them, as knowing that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock, and men would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them**. Now to the faithful discharge of the duties comprehended in this exhortation he urges them, as I said, by a consideration of the example he himself set them. Nor was there in this the least ostentation or vain-glory. It was fit he should upon so extraordinary an occasion, appeal to them, for the uprightness of his conduct. And the tenderness of the scene, he might well

* Acts xx. 30.

hope as they most affectionately loved him, would add weight to the instructions arising from his example, Wherefore he reminds them, first, of his services among them: and secondly, after what manner they were performed.

FIRST, In general he tells them he had *served the Lord*. Christ was his master, and to serve his interests had been his grand object. To this end he had *taught* them *publickly*, † had *preached the kingdom of God* * among them, had *declared the divine counsel* to them, ‡ and had *testified the gospel of the grace of God*, || insisting on the necessity of *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*. § The several truths of natural and revealed religion he had largely discoursed of, illustrating, defending, and improving them. And so he had *served CHRIST*, by laboring to the utmost of his power to spread the favour of his gospel far and wide, to convert men from their sins unto God, and to assist ani-

† Acts xx. 20 * v. 25. ‡ v. 27. || v. 24.
§ v. 21.

mate and comfort christians in the path of duty. And then,

SECONDLY. He tells them after what manner he had served the LORD ; what was his temper spirit and views. — That he was well instructed in the mind and will of his divine master is not to be questioned. His epistles, which may be consider'd as so many sermons preached to the churches, sufficiently shew this. But though his knowledge and gifts he received in an extraordinary and miraculous way ; yet he neglected not the proper and natural means of improvement, such as reading meditation and prayer, as may be gathered from other passages of his history, though not particularly mentioned here. Knowing thus the will of his master, he set himself diligently to conform to it. He was with them *at all seasons* *. He *taught them publickly, and from house to house* †. He *ceased not to warn them night and day with tears* ‡. And he shewed these elders to whom he was now

* Acts xx. 18. † v. 20. ‡ v. 31.

addressing himself, how that *laboring**, as he had done, they ought to support the weak.—His fidelity also in his master's service was no less remarkable. Faithful he was to the instructions he had received from him, not *shunning to declare all the counsel of God*†. Faithful he was to those committed to his care, *warning every one of them, and keeping back nothing that was profitable to them*‡. And faithful he was likewise to the consciences of all men; so that they could *bear him record, that he was pure from their blood*§.—Chearful and disinterested he was also in his master's work, encouraging himself therein not with the prospect of worldly gain, but with the noble satisfaction of doing good, and the pleasing hope of being acknowledged and rewarded by CHRIST another day. To which purpose he tells them, that they were his witnesses, that he had *coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel, yea that his own hands had minister'd unto his necessities, and to them that were with him*||; that he had *labored to*

* Acts v. 35. † v. 27 ‡ v. 31. 20. § v. 26.
|| xx. 33, 34.

support the weak; that he had been of the same mind with him in whose cause he was embarked, *that it is more blessed to give than to receive* *; and that his heart was so set upon his work, that he did *not count his life dear to him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God* †. — His humility also he reminds them of: that he had *served the Lord*, not with vanity affectation and pride, but *with all humility of mind*, with sobriety, lowliness, and condescension; remembering that though it was an honourable office he held, yet he was a servant, that though he was possessed of abilities superior to others, yet that these he had received, and that whatever success he had met with it was of God. In one word, for their imitation, as well as in vindication of his own uprightness, he omits not to mention his constancy and perseverance in the service of CHRIST. At Ephesus as well as other places he had met with various discouragements both out-

* Acts v. 35. † v. 34.

ward an
and en
the first
momen
from th
LORD,
earnest
though
await
him:
itself,
might
conter
fall a
cause
might
ercise
sus i

T
exam
Eph
ther
it;

ward and inward; he had shed *many tears*, and endured *many temptations*. Yet from the first day he came among them to the moment he was by providence called away from them, he had continued to serve the LORD, and *not ceased* day or night to labor earnestly to promote their good. And though he now saw *that bonds and afflictions* awaited him, yet *none of these things* moved him: no, nor did the prospect of death itself, tremendous as the very idea of it might seem, shake his resolution. He was content, yea he counted it his honor, to fall a sacrifice in this the best and noblest cause in the world; only praying that he might pass out of life, in the triumphant exercise of that hope which the gospel of JESUS inspires*.

THUS you see the apostle offers his own example to these ministers of the church of Ephesus, for their imitation. Nor was there, as I said before, any indecency in it; since he held a superior station in the

* Acts xx. 23, 24.

support the weak; that he had been of the same mind with him in whose cause he was embarked, *that it is more blessed to give than to receive* *; and that his heart was so set upon his work, that he did *not* count his life dear to him, *so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God* †.—His humility also he reminds them of: that he had *served the Lord*, not with vanity affectation and pride, but *with all humility of mind, with sobriety, lowliness, and condescension*; remembering that though it was an honourable office he held, yet he was a servant, that though he was possessed of abilities superior to others, yet that these he had received, and that whatever success he had met with it was of God. In one word, for their imitation, as well as in vindication of his own uprightness, he omits not to mention his constancy and perseverance in the service of CHRIST. At Ephesus as well as other places he had met with various discouragements both out-

* Acts v. 35. † v. 34.

ward a
and en
the first
momen
from th
LORD,
earnest
though
await
him:
itself,
might
conter
fall a
cause
might
ercise
sus i
T
exan
Eph
ther
it;

ward and inward ; he had shed *many tears*, and endured *many temptations*. Yet from the first day he came among them to the moment he was by providence called away from them, he had continued to serve the LORD, and *not ceased* day or night to labor earnestly to promote their good. And though he now saw *that bonds and afflictions* awaited him, yet *none of these things* moved him : no, nor did the prospect of death itself, tremendous as the very idea of it might seem, shake his resolution. He was content, yea he counted it his honor, to fall a sacrifice in this the best and noblest cause in the world ; only praying that he might pass out of life, in the triumphant exercise of that hope which the gospel of Jesus inspires*.

THUS you see the apostle offers his own example to these ministers of the church of Ephesus, for their imitation. Nor was there, as I said before, any indecency in it ; since he held a superior station in the

* Acts xx. 23, 24.

church of God, was divinely inspired, and had such an interest in their affections as very well intitled him to this freedom.

AND now, my brother, from his example thus drawn out to our view by himself, and urged upon us, as I may say, with his dying lips, let us take our instructions and motives to the duties of that sacred office we have taken upon us. Allow me then

I. To remind you of the service itself required of a christian minister in this station : And

II. To shew you after what manner it should be performed, suggesting as I go along the proper motives to animate us to the several parts of our duty.

I. As to the service itself you owe your master. It is required of you,

1. To preach the word, that is, the doctrines and duties of natural and revealed

religion, which I need not stay here particularly to recite, as you have yourself now made so good a confession of them. These you are to explain defend and improve, taking your arguments and motives chiefly from the sacred scriptures. And in so doing, let your reasoning be clear and convincing, your illustrations apt and striking, your language plain and familiar, and your addresses serious and pathetic. Aim, not to amuse but to instruct; not to touch the passions only, but to reach the conscience. And if you would succeed in both these, you must support what you say with clear evidence of divine authority, and labor by all possible means to get at the hearts and feelings of those who hear you. Insist chiefly on such subjects as are of the greatest importance, omitting nothing that is for edification. Treat doctrines practically, and duties evangelically. Adapt your discourses to every possible case; at the same time keeping the particular mistakes of individuals out of your view. Aim at variety; and yet let not method give way to decla-

mation. Study your subject accurately; yet if possible discourse upon it freely. Enter yourself into the spirit of it, and be not content unless others feel it with you. Speak as in the presence of God, and as one who remembers he is to give an account. In a word, let your preaching be preceded and followed with your earnest cries to heaven for success.—And now, after what hath been thus said concerning public instruction, I shall only add as to public prayer, which yet is a very important branch of religious worship, that freedom, variety, some regard to method, and above all fervency, will be of eminent use to render it acceptable and profitable.

2. As an Elder of this christian church you are to administer ordinances. These are Baptism and the LORD's supper, of which it will suffice to say, that as they are positive institutions, so you are to attend strictly to the directions which CHRIST hath given concerning them; and as they are instituted for spiritual and religious purposes, so you

are to administer them with a seriousness, affection, and cheerfulness, suited to their solemnity, importance and expressiveness. —It is also the office of an Elder (though you are not at present called to the exercise of this particular branch of duty, it being your happiness to serve your master in connexion with an honored and affectionate parent,) I say it is the office of an Elder or Bishop,

3. To preside in the house of God. Scripture describes a person of this character as a *Ruler* *, as one set *over the church* †, and to whom is intrusted *the care of it* ‡. Not that ministers have an authority to enact new laws, or to govern arbitrarily and independently of the people.—No, their office is to explain the laws of CHRIST, to preside in the discipline of the church, and in a due and orderly manner to execute those commands which are clearly laid down in the word of God relative to it. As therefore the people are required to pay a

* Heb. xiii. 7. † 1 Thes. v. 12. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 5.

becoming respect to their ministers as rulers ; so ministers are forbid to lord it over GOD's heritage. Learn then from the sacred records how you are to behave yourself in the house of GOD. When you shall be called to preside in this christian church (which I pray GOD may be yet many years) let your deportment be in every respect agreeable to the importance of this station. *Rule well* ; so will you *be accounted worthy of double honor* *. Upon you it will lie principally to inquire into the state and character of those who are admitted to the communion of the church ; to see that justice is done those who are censured by it, or excluded from it ; and to maintain peace, order, and purity. All which, I need not tell you, will require prudence and steadiness, gravity and meekness, impartiality and tenderness. The other branch of your office I shall mention, is

4. THAT of private instruction, reproof, and exhortation. The apostle tells the

* 1 Tim. v. 17.

Ephesi
taught
every
ministe
time i
preclu
fary r
Prude
less co
mom
occasi
subse
howe
sick,
who
espe
to t
dut
7
dut
I
wh
an

Ephesians, as you have seen, that he had taught them *from house to house*, and warned every one of them *night and day**. Not that ministers are to spend the whole of their time in visiting the people: for that would preclude other more important and necessary means of serving their real interests. Prudence must direct here, and matters of less consequence give way to those of greater moment. Friendly interviews even in an occasional way, may, if properly managed, subserve very valuable purposes. A point however should be made of visiting the sick, stepping in to the assistance of those who are under any particular calamity, and especially of warning such as we see exposed to temptation, or out of the way of their duty.

THUS have I touched upon the several duties of the ministerial office. I come now

II. To shew you more particularly after what manner they are to be discharged, and the motives you have to quicken and

* 1 Tim. xx. 31.

becoming respect to their ministers as rulers ; so ministers are forbid to lord it over GOD's heritage. Learn then from the sacred records how you are to behave yourself in the house of GOD. When you shall be called to preside in this christian church (which I pray GOD may be yet many years) let your deportment be in every respect agreeable to the importance of this station. *Rule well* ; so will you *be accounted worthy of double honor* *. Upon you it will lie principally to inquire into the state and character of those who are admitted to the communion of the church ; to see that justice is done those who are censured by it, or excluded from it ; and to maintain peace, order, and purity. All which, I need not tell you, will require prudence and steadiness, gravity and meekness, impartiality and tenderness. The other branch of your office I shall mention, is

4. THAT of private instruction, reproof, and exhortation. The apostle tells the

* 1 Tim. v. 17.

Ephesi
taught
every o
ministe
time i
preclu
sary r
Prude
less co
mome
occasi
subse
howe
sick,
who
espec
to t
duty
T
dut
I
wh
an

Ephesians, as you have seen, that he had *taught them from house to house*, and *warned every one of them night and day**. Not that ministers are to spend the whole of their time in visiting the people: for that would preclude other more important and necessary means of serving their real interests. Prudence must direct here, and matters of less consequence give way to those of greater moment. Friendly interviews even in an occasional way, may, if properly managed, subserve very valuable purposes. A point however should be made of visiting the sick, stepping in to the assistance of those who are under any particular calamity, and especially of warning such as we see exposed to temptation, or out of the way of their duty.

THUS have I touched upon the several duties of the ministerial office. I come now

II. To shew you more particularly after what manner they are to be discharged, and the motives you have to quicken and

* 1 Tim. xx. 31.

animate you in your work. You are a *servant* of CHRIST. As such therefore it becomes you,

1. To be solicitously concerned to *know* your master's will. The reasonableness and importance of this must appear to every one at first view. He who undertakes any service for another, to which through ignorance and want of abilities he is totally unequal, acts a weak and unworthy part. And it is greatly to be lamented, that too many who have the slenderest pretences to either knowledge or gifts for the ministry, do vainly intrude themselves into the sacred office, and bring great dishonour upon it. But this, Sir, is not your character. Yet whatever abilities God has blessed you with, if you serve him as you ought, it will be your concern to cultivate and improve them. Every kind of knowledge is useful to a minister. Natural knowledge is so; especially those branches of it which enable him to consult the sacred scriptures in the language wherein they were wrote; to enter into the reason-

ings, maxims, and principles upon which mankind act; and to illustrate and defend the doctrines, prophecies, histories, and miracles of the bible. Get as much of this knowledge therefore as you can: and fail not to apply it to the great purposes of religion. Yet beware that these studies do not engross too much of your time, and that you are not vain of the acquisitions you make.

BUT what I would more earnestly recommend, is an improvement in divine knowledge; in the knowledge of GOD and his will, of CHRIST and the way of salvation by him, and of mankind and their most important interests. To this end study the volume of nature and providence: here you will find rich entertainment, and be furnished with many useful materials for public and private instruction. But especially study the bible. Let that be ever near you, in your heart, and in your mouth. Endeavour to get a clear just and satisfactory view of the great truths it contains, their

nature, evidence, connection, importance, and use. *Appollos was mighty in the scriptures**. And he that will be a *workman that needeth not to be ashamed*, must be expert in *the word of truth*, and know how *rightly to divide it*.† *Give attendance therefore to reading. Meditate on these things. Give yourself wholly to them, that your profiting may appear to all* ‡. And let me remind you of what I am well persuaded you are sensible, that an exact just and critical knowledge of the scriptures will be of little avail either to your comfort or usefulness, if it be not experimental and practical. Study therefore your own heart. Labor to come at a thorough acquaintance with yourself. Knowledge thus derived from the bible and experience, will be of the greatest use to you in your master's service. It will enable you to instruct others with a clearness, evidence, authority, and affection, that nothing else can do. *We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen* §. What is a minister

* Acts xviii. 24. † 2 Tim. ii. 15. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 13. 15. § John, iii. 11.

of the finest natural abilities, and of the most extensive acquired knowledge, if he be defective here ! And need I add the great importance of daily imploring divine instruction ? *If any man lack wisdom* (and surely this is the grand object with a servant of CHRIST) *let him ask it of God* the father of lights, and of the spirit of illumination*. Have your eye continually upon your master, and your ear ever open to his commands, saying, *Lord, what I see not teach thou me* †. To knowledge should be added.

2. *Fidelity*. For to what purpose is it that a servant knows his master's will, if he be void of integrity, conscience, and good faith ? Of your uprightness, Sir, I am well satisfied : yet it behoves me to remind you of this, as it is one of the most eminent qualifications of a servant.—Here then I would exhort you, my brother, to that faithfulness you owe to yourself in your private capacity as a christian. Take heed to

* Jam. i. 5. † Job xxxiv. 32.

your religion, that it be sincere and genuine, lively and prevalent. 'Tis not sufficient that your morals only are good, which is indeed a matter indispensably necessary to your comfort, reputation, and usefulness; but it should be your great concern that your heart is right with God. *Examine yourself* therefore frequently *whether you be in the faith* *. Aim to live under the influence of the truths you preach. And let not the personal duties incumbent on you as a christian, be superseded by those of your relative and public character. Ministers have souls to be saved as well as the people committed to their care. 'Tis therefore sad indeed when they have cause to lament, that whilst they have kept the vineyards of others, their own hath been neglected †. And it is still more dreadful when like Bellerophon, of whom the poets speak, they themselves carry the news of their own approaching condemnation. "I verily believe, says an antient writer, that few ministers will be saved". God forbid this

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. † Sol. Song, i. 6.

should be the case ! Yet the very apprehension of it should excite us to watchfulness and circumspection.—Be faithful also to yourself in your public as well as private capacity. Look well to your aims and views in the discharge of your work ; that you are not governed by worldly principles either of honor or profit ; that you do *not preach yourself* ; and that you *covet not any man's silver or gold or apparel* : but that you are actuated by a concern for your master's glory, and the welfare of immortal souls.

—See that you faithfully use the talents with which God has intrusted you in his service, not slothfully concealing them in indolence, nor yet inconsiderately wasting them upon pursuits, wholly foreign to your office and character as a minister of CHRIST.

—Be faithful to the light and knowledge you have received, or may receive ; *not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God*, so far as you are satisfied concerning it, and *keeping back nothing that may be profitable* to those who hear you.—And in one word, make a point of it to deal faithfully and

uprightly with the consciences of men. Tell them plainly their undone condition by nature, and the only way of salvation by JESUS CHRIST. To you, as a servant of CHRIST, *is committed the word of reconciliation*: wherefore *pray men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God* *. Do not dare to flatter the vices of any; nor suffer yourself to be deterred from the steady discharge of your duty by any worldly considerations whatsoever: *but by manifestation of the truth, commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God* †. So will you be able to say with the apostle at the close of your ministry, *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.*

Now in order to excite you to all due fidelity in your work, reflect frequently on your solemn engagements to the master you have the honor to serve. Think with yourself how much your comfort and your usefulness depend on your faithfulness. Constant and uniform integrity of conduct will

* 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. † iv. 2.

secure you the esteem and regard of those around you ; and a consciousness of your own upright views will give you boldness, and carry you through difficulties and reproaches that in some instances would otherwise be hardly surmountable. Set before you the many examples of fidelity you have upon divine record. *Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant* *. Jeremiah by his integrity became *as a fenced brazen wall* ; so that *they who fought against him prevailed not, God being with him* †. In like manner CHRIST also *was faithful to him that appointed him* †. And to these considerations add that of the last solemn account you are to give to your master ; and which our Saviour himself represents in a very striking manner in the parable of the talents §. Thus as servants it is required of us that we are faithful.

BUT since there are hurtful and dangerous extremes into which even faithfulness,

* Heb. iii. 5. † Jer. xv. 20. ‡ Heb. iii. 2.
§ Mat. xxv. 14. 30.

or however a pretence to it, sometimes hurries men ; let me recommend to you,

3. *Prudence*. This is a virtue of very great importance to persons of every character and condition of life, but especially to ministers who are placed in stations of so public a nature, as necessarily lead them into numerous connexions, and draw upon them the attention of all around them. *Be wise as serpents* *, said our saviour to his disciples. Some men of upright minds and of good abilities too, have through imprudence rendered their own lives very uncomfortable to them, hurt themselves in the opinion of their people, greatly hindered if not wholly prevented their usefulness, and in some instances kindled flames in communities, that it hath not been in their power quickly to extinguish. Discretion therefore is not only ornamental and commendable, but important and necessary. It is so in many instances which time will not allow me now particularly to recite. Some

* Mat. x. 16.

however I must mention ; and if these should any of them be thought trifling in themselves, I shall be forgiven, as upon reflexion it will perhaps be found, that matters of a trivial nature to appearance, are many times the principal objects of prudence.

LET it be your concern to *abstain* not from *evil* itself only, but from *the appearance* of it *. He who will admit of no distinction between what is lawful and what is expedient ; and who, under a pretence of not violating any direct precept, allows himself in what custom hath at all made indecent, is, to say the best of him (especially if he be a minister) a very inconsiderate and foolish man. Though a gloomy moroseness and severity of manners is as unworthy a servant of JESUS as another man ; yet there is surely a dignity of conduct that ought always to distinguish his behaviour. Mingle decency therefore with all your pleasantness, and let your amusements be no affront to your understanding, any more

* 1 Thes. v. 22.

than your religion. Be prudent in the management of your temporal affairs; that you may if possible be charitable without being unjust, and make a decent and respectful appearance without incurring the charge of extravagance. While you preserve a becoming superiority to the petulant and obstinate humours of some, think it not beneath you to accommodate yourself to the weaknesses of others. Your dress, your carriage, your very language, may have an effect in some instances to win the regards of your people. The apostle, in matters that were indifferent, became *all things to all, that he might save some**: nor yet let your readiness to oblige degenerate into servility. Visit your people; but not too frequently. converse freely and cheerfully with them; but let no ill-natured reflexions on other men's characters make any part of the entertainment. Be ready to advise them on all occasions; but enter as little as possible into their private and temporal concerns. Labor to promote

* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

peace
fittest
Prefer
be no
fling d
from
not
Look
ted in
ness v
who
word
peop
to co
Prud
not o
ness
kind
to y
N
and
mar
go v

peace ; but think not yourself always the fittest person to interpose in differences. Preserve order in the house of God ; but be not fond of bringing thither every trifling dispute. Speak to men's consciences from the pulpit in general ; but tell them not thus publicly their private faults. Look well to the characters of those admitted into your church : and mingle tenderness with all your faithfulness towards those who fall under the dealings of it. In a word, never covet to be thought by your people infallible ; nor yet give them cause to consider you as weak and imprudent. — Prudence thus guiding your steps, you will not only prevent many occasions of uneasiness to yourself and others, but secure a kind of respect that will contribute greatly to your usefulness.

Nor yet will all the prudence, caution, and address in the whole world, enable a man to excuse or conceal slothfulness. I go on therefore to exhort you,

K

4. To *diligence*. They greatly mistake the matter, who look upon the ministry as an indolent kind of employment. It may be so to those, who think they have discharged all the duties of it, when they have filled up two or three hours of one day in the week, with some general talk upon subjects they have not studied or taken any pains about; and thrown away the other days in idle and fruitless visits from house to house. But I am sure, if it be duly and conscientiously attended to, it will be found to be a very painful and laborious service. It is a service that requires the vigorous exertion of all the powers both of the mind and the body. The doctrines of natural and revealed religion are various, and some of them perhaps difficult to be apprehended: a minister therefore of understanding and integrity as he would be glad to get a clear and just view of them, for his own satisfaction, and that he may be able to instruct others in them, so he must take pains to that end. Christian morality and casuistry is a science of no small use to

him, whose office it is to teach others their duty ; but being full of intricacies and knotty questions, it requires a great deal of attention and reading, to enable a man properly to solve them. And above all, as the grand object of preaching is the converting men from their sins, and the saving their souls ; so to deal properly with their understandings, consciences, and passions, on these interesting matters, makes study and preparation, in a dependance upon a superior influence, of very great importance. Now how can an indolent man expect to succeed in regard of either of these objects, or in the pursuit of any other branch of learning ? Study he must, if he be wise and knowing ; for knowledge is not now to be had by inspiration. And *much study*, the wisest of mere men hath told us, *is a weariness of the flesh* *. Many a healthful constitution has been pull'd down by intense application this way. And then the various other services to which a minister is called at home and abroad, in the

* Eccles. xii. 12.

house of God and in the world, in his own congregation and in those with which he stands connected ; services regular and occasional ; and which I have not time now to enumerate, all shew the necessity of diligence and activity. Hence they who sustain this sacred character, are described in scripture, as workmen, labourers, soldiers, and racers.

Now, my Brother, if you would be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, a servant that approves himself to his master, be diligent. *Neglect not the gift that is in you**. Wrap not up your talent in a napkin, but use it. Do not fly back from study, because it is painful. Do not lay aside reading, from a vain apprehension that you know enough. Do not neglect composition, thro' a pretence of regard to the divine influence. Our master says to us in regard of the duties of our office, as he does to private christians in regard of the business of their salvation, *work out your ministry, with fear and*

* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

trembling ; for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do after his good pleasure *. Be ever either planning some scheme for the honor of CHRIST and the good of men, or carrying it into execution : ever engaged in some useful service either directly or indirectly, privately or publicly. *Be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort* †. The apostle was *with the Ephesians at all seasons, and ceased not day or night to pursue the grand object of doing good.* And would you be thus diligent ? Let me admonish you to watch carefully against all lets or hindrances to your duty, and against all temptations outward and inward. *Entangle yourself as little as may be with the affairs of this life* ‡. *Be temperate in the use of worldly things* §. And let the prudence I have been recommending aid your zeal, by enabling you so to lay your schemes, and so to dispose your time, that you may do a great deal in a little time.

* Phil. ii. 12, 13. † 2 Tim. iv. 2. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 4. § Tit. i. 8.

AND now to animate you my Brother to diligence, what a prodigious variety of arguments might I collect? Indeed they are so numerous that I cannot even mention them all. Of a few however I must remind you.—Think then of the importance of your work. There is none like it. It hath for its object what cost the son of God his most precious blood, even the salvation of the immortal soul. Should not the thought enflame our breasts with unceasing ardor?—Think of the shortness of your time. The day with you, with us all, will soon be spent; and *the night cometh when no man can work* *. An argument this which hath its effect with satan to make him diligent; and why not with us? *He hath great wrath, because he hath but a short time* †. Think of the assistance that is promised you. You are a *worker together with God* ‡. His *grace is sufficient for you* §. And *lo he is with you alway* ||. O animating consideration!—In one word, amidst all the toil

* John ix. iv. † Rev. xii. 12. ‡ 2 Cor. vi. i. § 2 Cor. xii. 9. || Mat. xxviii. ult.

you endure, think of the rest and happiness that shall quickly succeed to it. *Dying in the Lord* whom you serve, you *shall rest from your labors*, and your *works shall follow you**. And now this leads me to recommend what is of no small importance to excite us to diligence; that is

5. *Cbearfulness*. The services of a slave may indeed turn to some account; but they will neither be performed so well, nor will they be so acceptable as those of a free man, a servant of a free lively temper, and whose heart is in his master's work. He who does any business through mere necessity, will feel double pain in doing it; will care not how it is done, so it be but done; and will give himself little trouble about the success of it, provided he may escape the punishment of absolutely neglecting it. And of what worth, of what utility is such a person's service either to himself or others? On the contrary, he who does his duty, not grudgingly but of a willing mind, not out

* Rev. xiv. 13.

of constraint but love to his master; though his strength be small and his abilities slender, he will do it with much greater alertness, and with much happier success, than a person of the contrary character, though endowed with twice his abilities. It may be said of such an one as the apostle declares of a charitable man, *the Lord loveth a cheerful servant* *. Be therefore, my brother, cheerful in your work : both your comfort and success, under God, depends much upon it.

I KNOW indeed that ministers often meet with many things to damp their spirits and sadden their hearts ; trials, even the distant apprehension of which is enough to produce this effect in a degree. And were I disposed to draw a gloom over your mind on this cheerful occasion, I might tell you of the difficulty and painfulness of the work itself in every branch of it ; of the great variety of frames both of body and mind to which ministers are liable as well

* 2 Cor. ix. 7.

as other men ; of the hidings of God's face which they sometimes endure ; of the opposition they meet with from the declared enemies of religion, and even at times from their very friends ; and, what is particularly to be lamented, of the grievous disappointment that often attends their labors. If it were fit, I say, to cast a gloom on your mind, I might call up all these sad scenes to your view. But still you have cause to be chearful, and it is upon the whole your duty to be so, however under some particular circumstances it may be nearly impossible.

ALLO W me then just to mention in this place a few among other powerful means to excite and promote chearfulness in your work.—Labor to come at a full satisfaction in your own breast, that you do ingenuously and affectionately love your master. This will have an amazing effect to make you superior to difficulties.—Eye the hand of God in calling you into his service, and fixing you in the particular situation you

are. This will give you courage, and reconcile you to some unpleasing circumstances you may meet with.—Look now and then upon this and the other seal of your ministry. The fight will cheer your spirit and gladden your heart.—Think frequently with yourself who it is you serve, not an arbitrary tyrannical severe master, but a master infinitely kind compassionate and good. A master who knows your frame and remembers you are dust; is sensible of your weaknesses and infirmities, and makes all tender allowances for them; and who as he pities you, is ever ready also to support aid and strengthen you. This consideration, that the grace of God was sufficient for him, made the apostle *glory in infirmities* *. I will add to this the thinking often of the wages your master has promised you; such wages as all the monarchs on earth cannot give their servants; wages on which you may subsist comfortably now, and on which you shall live happy and glorious to all eternity. With what cheerfulness will

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

it inspire your heart to realize the day, when the blessed JESUS whom you serve shall congratulate you, on your having by the grace of GOD acquitted yourself faithfully in his service ; and shall say to you in the presence of angels and men, and of this flock over whom you are now made an overseer, *Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ! **

BUT it is very possible ministers may, amidst such pleasing reflections and such joyful prospects, grow vain ; permit me now then to exhort you, my Brother, to what is particularly mentioned in the words first read, and that is,

6. To serve the LORD *with all humility of mind*. By humility I mean not an affected ignorance of any advantages you may enjoy above others, or a voluntary mortification of habit, language or manners : but such a sobriety of temper as stands opposed to haughtiness and pride, conceit and self-

* Mat. xxv. 21.

sufficiency ; a humility that is accompanied with candor and charity, with meekness and condescension. *Think soberly* of yourself as you *ought to think* *. Be sensible of your imperfection and liableness to err. Take heed how you entertain the most distant idea of merit in your services : be rather abased in the sight of your master, and sensible that you are after all an unprofitable servant. *Depart from me, O Lord*, said Peter, *for I am a sinful man* †. Beware how you rely on your own strength ; on the contrary, humbly expect all that assistance you need in your work, from the spirit and grace of God. Exalt not yourself above your fellow servants ; or if you are at any time tempted to this, think of those amiable qualities in them wherein they excell you. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints*, says the apostle, *is this grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ* ‡. Nor yet carry it haughtily towards any committed to your care ; no not to the weakest, or on some accounts the most

* Rom. xii. 3. † Luke v. 8. ‡ Eph. iii. 8.

contemptible, of your flock. The contrary temper, in these instances and many others that reason and religion dictate, will greatly adorn your character, secure you the esteem of those to whom you minister, and gain your instructions an easy admission to their hearts. An arrogant self-conceited minister, by his ill-treatment of others, not only shuts himself out from those opportunities of improvement to which humility would introduce him ; but is sure to be held in sovereign contempt of most discerning persons whom he would seem to teach, and to whom he is hereby rendered totally incapable of doing good.

THEY who acquit themselves at all properly in this sacred profession, have I am sensible their temptations to vanity. The nature of their office, though it challenges not that sort of homage which is the usual perquisite of wealth and power, is nevertheless truly respectful and honorable. It is so by the appointment of heaven, however on the one hand, men of profane

minds may despise it, and the superstitious on the other may unduly revere it. Their abilities likewise, if these at all exceed what is common, are mighty apt to ensnare them into a secret kind of self-complacency. And if they are so happy as to be successful, and of consequence to be beloved and caressed by those to whom they are instruments of good; there are a thousand circumstances which frequently arise to sooth their vanity.

Be therefore, my Brother, on your guard against these temptations. Remember that though your office is honorable, yet you are a servant: and it is highly incongruous for a servant to be otherwise than humble. Reflect with yourself, that be your talents what they may, they are no other than you have received. 'Tis *by the grace of God* you are *what you are* *. And keep it ever in mind, that the success of your labors depends infinitely more on the divine influence and blessing, than on your utmost pains and

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

industry. To which I would add this consideration, that in order to preserve a balance in those otherwise sincere and faithful ministers who are yet prone to vanity, God is often pleased, and in great mercy too, to exercise them with various and peculiar trials. As you would therefore tender your own comfort, honor and usefulness, be solicitous to serve your master with all humility of mind. This was a temper that eminently prevailed in the great apostle, whose example we have before us: and he learned it of the blessed JESUS himself, who was *meek and lowly in heart* *. *Let the same mind then be in you, which was also in Christ; who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross* †. And now, I shall only add one exhortation more, and that is,

* Mat. xi. 29. † Phil. ii. 5. 8.

7. And lastly, To *patience* and *perseverance*. Of every faithful minister of CHRIST it may be said, as the apostle affirms of himself, that he *serves* his master *with many tears and temptations*. Tears he finds cause to shed, not on account of outward inconveniencies and miseries only, to which he stands exposed in common with the rest of mankind; and which under particular circumstances of reproach and persecution may be his lot in a greater degree than others: but upon considerations of a more important nature. It must be peculiarly distressing to him, to have a body of sin and death to struggle with, the power and malice of Satan to oppose, and the withdrawment of the divine presence to deplore. The nature of the work in which he is engaged renders these exercises, in that almost infinite variety of them which I cannot now stay to describe, exceedingly afflictive indeed. Who so much to be pitied as the man, who while he is laboring to animate others to the combat, is himself nearly borne down, at least in his own apprehension, with the

violent assaults of the enemy? Who while he is attempting to administer consolation to others in spiritual affliction, is perhaps himself clad in sackcloth and bathed in tears? Yet, my Brother, though thus faint, you must pursue; though thus almost spent and exhausted, it behoves you to be courageous. Should you yield, what will be the consequence? Consider it well. How will the captain under whose banner you fight be dishonored!—the hearts of those you lead on to the battle be dispirited!—and the powers of darkness triumph! Remember that these are trials, which other faithful ministers that have gone before you, have endured as well as you; that infinite wisdom may have ends the most interesting and important to answer thereby; that the Saviour is *touched with the feeling of your infirmities* *; and that as he pities you and prays for you, so through his grace you shall be more than a conqueror over all the powers of sin and death. But these are trials, which however painful and distressing,

* Heb. iv. 15.

instead of inducing ministers to desert their work, do often prove the means of animating them therein.

THERE are other discouragements I must not forget to apprize you of; I mean such as will arise from the treatment your ministry may possibly meet with from some at least who may attend upon it. You have indeed a fair and pleasing prospect of comfort as well as usefulness before you. Give me leave to congratulate you upon it. A prospect arising both from the unanimity and affection with which this numerous church hath called you, and the success that hath already crowned your labors. From difficulties however of this kind, in a greater or less degree, and which are common to all the faithful servants of CHRIST, you must not expect to be intirely exempted. Nor yet shall I enlarge here on the passions and prejudices, the humors and tempers of even some good men themselves, which may sometimes make your bed uneasy to you. But rather would I tell you

before hand of the pain you will on some occasions feel, for the unsuccessfulness of your ministry, and for the sad disappointment your fond hopes will meet with, from those who have perhaps bid the fairest to shine in their profession. But though you are obliged to complain, saying, *who hath believed my report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed**? remember such was the lamentation of a prophet in early times. And though you have those to reprove, who so walk as *that they are enemies of the cross of Christ*; yet reflect with yourself that on the like account the great apostle *wept* before you †. Be your discouragements in a word what they may, coldness and neglect, ingratitude and want of tenderness, the apostacy of some, and the cruel abuse and persecution of others; let however *none of these things move you, neither count your life dear to you, so you may finish your course with joy. Consider the apostle and high priest of your profession, lest you be weary and faint in your mind* ‡. Com-

* Isa. liii. 1. † Phil. iii. 18. ‡ Heb. iii. 1. 12. 3.

mit your cause to him ; rely on his grace ; and encourage yourself with the happy prospect of the day that is approaching, *when the chief shepherd shall appear, and you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away* *.

THUS, my dear Brother, have I laid before you the duties, which as a servant you owe to the LORD JESUS CHRIST your master. And now as these exhortations are founded on the example of the great apostle, you will allow me, having expressed my most ardent wishes for your real honor, comfort and success, with *his* words to close this plain address. *I give thee charge, says he to Timothy, † in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession : that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords ;*

* 1 Pet. v. 4. † 1 Tim. vi. 13. 16.

(95)

*who only hath immortality, dwelling in the
light which no man can approach unto, whom
no man hath seen, nor can see : to whom be
honor and power everlasting. Amen.*

The



The

b

t

a

S

I

*The duties incumbent on church members,
and the manner in which
they should be performed, represented
and enforced,*

IN A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

O R D I N A T I O N

O F T H E

Rev. Mr. CALEB EVANS.

August 18, 1767, in Broad-Mead, BRISTOL.

By JOHN TOMMAS.



S E R M O N.

AS the part assigned me in the solemn service of this day, is to address you, my friends, who are the members of this christian church; I shall ground what I have to offer to your consideration, on that part of the apostle Paul's address to the church at Corinth, which you will find recorded in

**1 Cor. xvi. 14. LET ALL YOUR THINGS
BE DONE WITH CHARITY.**

THE apostle having recommended Timothy to the affectionate regards of the church at Corinth, and informed them of

N

the intention of Apollos to visit them when he should have a convenient time; in the verse before our text he addresses them in the following spirited manner: *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.* As if he had said, call to mind where you are, consider the nature and number of your adversaries, and be ever upon your guard against them; let your profess'd attachment to the faith of CHRIST be firm and invariable; and quit yourselves as becomes men of judgment and understanding. Be not like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive; but be strong in the LORD and in the power of his might. And he then adds in the words of our text, *Let ALL your things be done with charity.* That is, and let all that you do in every capacity, all you do in the world and in the church, in the family and in the closet, be done in the exercise of the most unfeigned love. Let this celestial grace diffuse its benign influence thro' the whole of your conduct.—

In further discoursing upon these words, in conformity to the nature and design of the service before me, I shall endeavor to shew

I. *What* things should be done by those who are in a church state.

II. POINT out the *manner* in which they should be done. And

III. ADVANCE some arguments to *in-*
force the practice of them.

I. I AM to shew *what* things should be done by those who are in a church state.

By being in a church state I mean being one of a company of professing saints assembled together, who have by mutual consent given themselves to the LORD and to one another according to the will of GOD, and solemnly engaged to walk together in all the commandments and ordinances of the LORD, to his glory and the edification of

one another.—Now that there are many peculiar duties incumbent upon those who are thus mutually joined together, is very evident from the nature of a religious society, the laws by which it is governed, and the ends to be answered thereby. And these peculiar duties may I apprehend very properly be considered either as they relate to pastors and ministers in the church : or as they respect the duty of private members one to another.

GIVE me leave then to set before you of this society, 1st, Some of those things which should be done by you, in relation to your pastor and minister : And then, —2dly, To mention to you some other things which immediately respect yourselves as private members of this church.

As pastors and ministers are placed in the church by the ordination of God, for the government and edification of the community ; so there are undoubtedly many things to be done by those who are in a

private capacity in the church, in relation to their ministers in particular; and in the practice of which it is their indispensable duty to be found.——It is their duty particularly,

1. *To know them.* This is what our apostle earnestly intreated of the church at Thessalonica. *And we beseech you brethren to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.**

By which more is intended than barely a knowledge of their persons, or a regard for them as christians; for that knowledge of them which is here recommended by the apostle, has evidently a respect to their office, and includes an acknowledgment of them in their ministerial capacity, as the servants of CHRIST, and as acting by authority from him. And this knowledge may also include a freedom and intimacy in conversing with them concerning the state of your souls, the frames in which you are, the comforts you enjoy, and the temp-

* Thes. v. 12.

tations you meet with. The reasons why you should cherish such a knowledge as this of your ministers are evident: for without it their ministrations will certainly be treated with inattention and carelessness by you; nor can they so well know how to speak a word in season, or lay before you those things which are calculated to promote your knowledge, establishment, comfort and joy. But I go on to recommend to you,

2. CONSTANT and fervent prayer to GOD for your ministers. I take it for granted that all who are fit for, and enjoy the privileges of church-fellowship, make conscience of prayer; and indeed, in my opinion, he who lives in the habitual neglect of this duty, has no just claim to the name of a christian. And all who attend to it from a proper sense of GOD's authority, and their own necessity, will surely remember those who preach the word to them, whenever they bow before the throne, in the closet, in the family, or in the

church. Paul, who well knew the necessity and usefulness of prayer, gives in his epistles to the churches, repeated exhortations to the exercise of it. To the church at Thessalonica he says, *brethren pray for us**. And to the Colossians he writes, *continue in prayer,—praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ†*. By steadily attending to this duty, you give a proof of your love to your ministers ; and you teach your children, your servants and others the regard you have, and which they likewise ought to have, for the ministers of CHRIST ; while they hear you thus pouring out your souls to GOD in their behalf. And did the members of gospel churches but properly consider the nature, the importance, and the difficulties of the ministerial employment ; did they but consider the opposition that those meet with who are engaged in this sacred work, both from within and without, they would soon be convinced of the reasonableness and necessity, of constant

* 1 Thes. v. 25. † Col. iv. 2. 3.

and fervent application to God on their account.

3. It is your duty to cherish in your own breasts, and endeavor to promote in others, a good opinion of your ministers. This is very particularly taken notice of by our apostle, and inculcated in several of his epistles. Speaking to the Thessalonians concerning those who were over them in the LORD, he beseeches them—to *esteem them very highly in love for their works sake.** And to Timothy he writes, *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of DOUBLE honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine* †. That pastors and teachers in the christian church are to be looked upon as the gift of CHRIST, and the effects of his special love, cannot be denied. For we read expressly, Eph. iv. 11, 12, that CHRIST gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the

* 1 Thess. v. 13. † 1 Tim. v. 17.

body of Christ. And if members of churches did but seriously consider who it is that has given them their ministers, and for what ends they are given, they must surely be convinced of the reasonableness of having a good opinion of them, and esteeming them very highly in love for their master's sake, and for the sake of the work in which they are employed. And indeed, their own advantage stands most intimately connected with it; for if they think but meanly of their persons and services, it is not to be supposed that they will be careful to attend upon their ministrations, or be concerned to have their souls edified and improved by them. And further,

4. Members of the church of CHRIST should never forget that submission in the LORD to those whom he hath set over them is their indispensable duty. This indeed is very evident from what we read in the epistle to the Hebrews. *Remember them which have the rule over you**; and obey them

* Heb. xiii. 7. 16.

*that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. It ought indeed to be supposed that they rule agreeably to the laws of CHRIST ; for if they do not, submission is so far from being a duty, that it is criminal. But when a pastor, in the faithful discharge of his office, acts in conformity to the rule which CHRIST has laid down in the New Testament, he is to be submitted to ; the counsels he gives are to be followed ; his exhortations are to be suffered ; and his reproofs are to be received with respect and esteem. For as he acts herein by authority from CHRIST his great master, to refuse submission to him, is no less than an act of rebellion against CHRIST himself. And accordingly we find so great was this evil in the judgment of our apostle, that he has branded those who are guilty of it with a mark of infamy. *If any man, say he, obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed**. And besides, their office in the*

* 2 Thess. iii. 14.

church, and the authority which they have a right to exercise in it, are the fruit of divine wisdom and love, and should be regarded therefore with a view to the spiritual *profit* of the community; so that submission to your spiritual rulers, while they continue to act agreeably to the nature and design of that authority with which CHRIST and the church have invested them, is the interest as well as duty of those over whom they are set as watchmen. And I should further observe,

5. It is your duty to do all you can to strengthen and encourage your ministers. If you fail here, you fall very short of that duty which is most certainly incumbent on you. Gospel ministers must expect to meet with trials; and the more faithful they are to God and the souls committed to their care, the greater will be the opposition made to them by satan, by men of corrupt minds, and by those who have a form of godliness without the power of it. Trials they often have arising from the un-

successfulness of their labors as to many who hear them ; and from the disappointment of their hope in others, who at one time bid fair to be their joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of CHRIST. And they have trials also very often from those, who notwithstanding they may be good men, yet through the peculiarity of their tempers, and the remains of corruption, are sometimes the occasion of much sorrow and grief to a faithful minister. These things considered then, is it not most clearly evident, that it is your indispensable duty to stand by and be ready to assist and encourage your ministers, under the various trials and sorrows to which they stand exposed, and frequently meet with, in the faithful discharge of their office in the church of God ?—You should, I would observe particularly, make a point of constantly attending the public labors of your ministers, whilst they continue faithful in the church and are capable of serving it. If it is their duty to labor amongst you, it must be your duty to attend their labors.

And a contrary behaviour, as it cannot but be the grief of a minister, and must weaken his hands in the work of his LORD; so 'tis the way to bring his weeping eyes with sorrow to the grave. Indeed it is an evil of such a nature that it cannot I think but be avoided by all who have any proper regard for the honor of GOD, the peace of the church, the comfort of their ministers, and the good of their own souls. And should any of you, my friends, be guilty of such a conduct as I am now speaking of, will it not be an open violation of your solemn engagements this day, and a direct contradiction of the choice you have publicly testified by holding up your hands? And remember,

6. THOSE who are in church fellowship should follow the example, and endeavour to support the reputation of those who are over them in the LORD. If it is the duty of pastors to be examples to the flock, and it is evident that they should be so, for our apostle says to Timothy, *be thou an example*

to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity * ; then surely it is the duty of those who have made choice of them for their overseers to *follow* their example. Accordingly we find this expressly recommended by our apostle to the church at Corinth ; *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ* † . And he takes notice moreover of the very same thing in his epistle to the church at Philippi ; *brethren be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an example* ‡ . Hence then it is plain that one end for which pastors and ministers are given to the church, is that they may be an example to it. And unless this is attended to, one end of their being placed in and over the church is lost. Remember then what you hear from, and see in your ministers that is agreeable to the word of God, you are called upon to transcribe into your own temper and conduct : and you have a promise for your encouragement in so doing, that *the God of peace shall be with you* § . Their repu-

* 1 Tim. iv. 12. † 1 Cor. xi. 1. ‡ Phil. iii. 17. § iv. 9.

tation moreover and character are likewise to be supported by you against the unjust charges of evil men; and no accusations are to be received against them, unless prov'd by the clearest evidence. *Against an elder, it is said, receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses* *. And as no countenance should be given to any evil and unsupported reports concerning them from others; so much less should such reports be raised, and spread by those over whom they are placed in the church. Nay, so far from this, that it should be the constant concern of the church to which they minister, to let all around them see, that if evil and wicked men have the fool-hardiness to strike at the cause of God through the sides of his ministers, they have the divine courage to appear in the defence of both. Once more,

7. You will not forget that a sufficient and comfortable maintenance is what your ministers have an undoubted right to, for

* 1 Tim. v. 19.

themselves and their families ; and it is the duty of those over whom they are placed, if circumstances will admit, to make a suitable provision for it. You to whom I now speak are better acquainted with the word of God than to be ignorant of this I am well satisfied ; yet nevertheless you will permit me to put you in remembrance of what you have read on this subject. *Let him that is taught in the word, says the apostle Paul, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn* *. Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the temple ; and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar. *EVEN SO* hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel †. These words need no comment, he that runs may read ; and they plainly shew us that ministers are not to receive a maintenance from those to whom they preach, as an act of charity, but as what they have an undoubted right to. For as they are called

* Gal. vi. 6. † 1 Cor. ix. 9, 13, 14.

by God and the church to labor for you, to spend and be spent for you, they certainly must have an indisputable right to a comfortable support from you.

HAVING thus laid before you some of those things which are to be done by you for your ministers; I go on to mention,

2. Some other duties which are incumbent upon you, with respect to one another as fellow members of the same church. It is to be supposed that those who are members of the same church are acquainted with each other, that they freely converse together, and love one another as our LORD has commanded, saying, *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you* *. And unless this be in some good measure the case, the following things will not I am sure be done by you; which yet it is evidently your duty to do. As,

* John xv. 12.

1. To bear one anothers burdens ; which is what the disciples of CHRIST are particularly called to in the present state. As it is written, *Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ* *. Let it then be remembred, that those who are in church-fellowship should be ready to assist each other in bearing those burdens which arise from the temptation of satan, sorrow for sin, disorders of body, and distress in outward circumstances. And this is to be done by every suitable expression of kindness and love, and in administering to their necessities both temporal and spiritual, as you may have ability and opportunity.

2. You are likewise to pray with and for one another. To this you are expressly exhorted by an inspired writer, who says, *Pray for one another* †. And social prayer as it is most evidently the duty, so it appears to have been the *practice* of the gospel churches, in the earliest age and purest times of the christian religion. And that

* Gal. vi. 2. † James v. 16.

man who is not convinced of the necessity and advantages of this duty, must have surely but little of the power of religion in his own soul, and be greatly defective in love to his brethren.

3. THOSE who are in church fellowship are required to *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another* *. They should be studiously careful to follow every thing which tends to promote the peace of their own souls, the peace of the church, and the peace of those who minister to them; and they should follow every thing that tends to their mutual edification in knowledge, in faith, in love, in purity and usefulness. And he who refuses to comply with these injunctions, or continues to live in the neglect of these things, can have no right, according to the laws of CHRIST, to the privileges of the house of GOD. As I have now laid before you, my friends, some of those things which you ought to do, both with respect

* Rom. xiv. 19.

to your ministers, and one another, I shall endeavor, as proposed,

II. To point out the manner in which they should be done. Our text informs us they are to be done with charity, by which we are to understand love. And to do them with charity, is I apprehend, to do them,

I. FROM a *principle* of love; which should undoubtedly be the spring of action in all that you do towards your ministers, towards one another in the church, and towards all with whom you have to do in the world. And this divine principle implanted in the soul by the spirit of God, will itself lead you not only to desire, and wish, and pray for the good of each other; but it will also lead you by every act of kindness, as far as may be in your power, to endeavor to promote it. This love is not in word and in tongue only, but *in deed and in truth*.* And

* John iii. 18.

2. To do those things which have been recommended to you in charity, is to do them in a *kind* and *affectionate* manner; not under the influence of a sour, peevish and provoking temper; but in the most sweet, peaceable, and obliging way. You will therefore study, not to exasperate the corruptions, but to engage the affections of one another in all that you do. And as you tender the glory of God, the comfort of your ministers, and your own peace prosperity and reputation as a church; guard against a selfish and unkind spirit: let it not be gratified but mortified. And let a kind, an affectionate temper and disposition, diffuse it's amiable and happy influence thro' all your conduct, in the church, the family, and the world. Again,

3. To do all your things with charity is to do them with kind and charitable *designs*; having the glory of God and the good of others in view: according to which we are all commanded, in whatsoever we do, to *do it all to the glory of God.**

* 1 Cor. x. 31.

consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.† And this charity, moreover, *is kind, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil.*‡ But I shall now proceed,

III. To advance some arguments to inforce the practice of those things which have been laid before you. And here permit me to press them on you,

I. FROM the consideration, that they are enjoined upon and required of you by him whose right to prescribe and command is indisputable, and whose authority you have solemnly acknowledged in your christian profession. Let this consideration then have its full influence upon you, that the things which have been now laid before you required of by him who has a right to command, and who is infinite in wisdom, in goodness and love. They are the prescriptions of him whom you profess to love above all others, whose service is your noblest employ, whose

† Heb. x. 24. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 4. 5.

presence and blessing are your highest honor,
and greater felicity.

2. WITHOUT this charity all that you do in religion is nothing. This argument is set before us in the strongest light by our apostle, who assures us that we may speak with tongues, may have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, may have faith to remove mountains, may give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to devouring flames;—and YET, if we have no charity, are but as a *sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal*.^{*} And if all that you do towards *all men* should be done with charity; surely then all that you do towards those who are fellow members with you in the church, ought in an especial manner to flow from this divine principle, LOVE; without which, however splendid may be our profession, we are strangers to the grace of GOD.

3. CONFORMITY to GOD, and communion with him, consists much in the prin-

^{*} 1 Cor. xiii.

ciple and exercise of this temper and disposition which I have been setting before you. For we are told, *He that loveth not, knoweth not God.* God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.†* And we are exhorted to *put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness‡*. Righteousness and true holiness is the image of God; and all our pretensions to this without charity, is little better than detestable hypocrisy. And accordingly we read that *as God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,§* so likewise that *he who saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness until now.||* And *we know*, says the same apostle, *that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother abideth in death**. So that you see this heavenly disposition is in all those who are born from above; and the discovery of this temper is a necessary evidence of our being *partakers of the divine nature*.

* 1 John iv. 8. † ver. 16. ‡ Eph. iv. 24.
§ 1 John i. 5. || ii. 9. * iii. 14.

4. THE comfort and joy of your ministers depend also very much on your doing all your things with charity. Your connexion in the church has been entered into with a profession of unfeigned love to one another; the choice of your ministers has been made, and declared, as the effect of your affectionate regard for them; and you have professed your readiness to do all you can to promote their comfort and joy. But unless you attend to the advice in the text, to *do all your things with charity*, you can never effect what you professedly desire; for there is nothing more evident than that an affectionate and holy people are the comfort and joy of their ministers; and to see a contrary spirit prevail must certainly fill them with much sorrow; because such a spirit is dishonorable to GOD, an obstruction of their usefulness, and injurious to all who are under it's baleful influence.

5. PEACE and prosperity amongst you as a church likewise, stand inseparably connected with all your things being done with

charity. Love will maintain and promote peace ; love will seek the prosperity of the community in every lawful way, and will with the greatest care, avoid every thing that might break in upon it's peace, or interrupt its prosperity. And in the exercise of this charity, you have moreover reason to hope for the presence and blessing of the God of love and peace ; on which depend the growth of grace in your souls, and the increase of the interest of CHRIST among you. *Be perfect, then, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

6. YOUR reputation moreover and honor as a church, depend on your carefully attending to the things which have been laid before you. Long have you been a reputable and honorable society, and may you ever remain so ! Yet permit me to remind you, that it must be in the exercise of charity in all that you do. And if you have any desire (which, I doubt not you have) that this church may continue to be hono-

rable among the tribes of God's Israel, you will not fail to cultivate this disposition in all that you do. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity**. And need I tell you how dishonorable and how unlovely the contrary to this is? that it brings up an ill report of the good land? that it is a stumbling block in the way of enquirers? that it gives occasion to those, who are seeking every opportunity to confirm their prejudices, to pour contempt upon the cause and the followers of CHRIST?

7. THE last argument I shall make use of, shall be drawn from your expectations of future happiness. Do you not hope to dwell together for ever in the world of love, where all things will be done in perfect charity? Do you not hope to meet your ministers in that world? Do you not hope to meet one another there, before the throne of God, where it will be your employ for ever to bless him who hath loved you, to

* Psal. cxxxiii, 1.

praise him who died for you, and to adore him who hath sanctified you. Surely then the consideration of this happiness should engage you now to do all your things with charity. Such a hope should methinks powerfully induce you to acknowledge those who are over you, to pray earnestly for them, very highly to esteem them, cheerfully submit to them, steadily to stand by and encourage them, to follow their example, unitedly support their reputation, and generously provide an honorable maintenance for them. And this hope should also certainly engage you to sympathize with, and pray for one another; to wait at wisdom's gates and to fill up your places in the house of God; and in short, to do every thing from a principle of love to God and one another, in the most kind and affectionate manner, with a view to the glory of God and your mutual advantage.

I SHALL now conclude the subject with a few reflections. And,

1. FROM what you have heard, it is evident, that in the church of GOD, there are not only privileges to be enjoyed, but work to be done, and which ought carefully to be attended to by every member of it. Those who are members of the christian church should therefore be every day calling to mind, what they have to do for their ministers in the closet, in the family and the church; and think how they may assist them by their prayers to GOD for them, how they may contribute to promote their influence and usefulness, how they may be their joy and crown of rejoicing both now and in the day of CHRIST. And they should likewise consider what they have to do towards one another; and each be enquiring thus,—How may I most effectually succour a brother who is tempted? how may I be useful in recovering one that is declined? and what shall I do to promote the good of the whole community? And that you may be excited to diligence in the work to be done, and guarded against negligence in it, you should consider that the neglect

of it will be followed with the most lamentable consequences ; the hands of your ministers will be weakened, divisions will arise, the cause of CHRIST will be reproached, the grand enemy will be pleased, your characters will be stained, and your evidences for heaven will be clouded ; evils, which every conscientious and upright soul will deprecate, and from which he will ever desire to be preserved.

2. ARE all things to be done with charity ? Then a church of CHRIST, formed according to his order, and acting agreeably to his directions, is an amiable and lovely society. Zion is called *the perfection of beauty* * ; and her beauty shines in all her laws and ordinances, which are the orders of infinite wisdom and love. And how beautiful does a church appear, when all her members walk as becomes those who have given up themselves to the LORD ? It is then like the human body fitly joined together, all the members of which are set in their pro-

* Psal. l. 2.

per places, and act in a beautiful subserviency to each other ; and it is moreover then like a building fitly framed together, in such a manner as to have beauty, strength, and usefulness. Thus it will be when the members keep their places in the church, when the officers appear to be furnished with a large measure of gifts and grace, when they act with readiness and humility in the discharge of their office, and when private members walk together in love, in the order of the gospel, carefully observing the discipline of it. How amiable is such a society ! This shews what the church militant ought to be, and what the church triumphant will be ; according to which she is spoken of as a bride *adorned for her husband, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing* *.

3. If all things are to be done with charity, then a wrathful, selfish, proud and over-bearing spirit, in any who profess to be the disciples of CHRIST and are members of his church, is opposite to the laws

* Rev. xxi. 2. Eph. v. 27.

of his government, and inconsistent with the truly amiable spirit of genuine christianity. Such professors as these, how high soever they may stand in their own opinion, or in the judgment of those whose interest it may be at present to flatter them, are in reality a reproach and burden to the church to which they belong ; they are a hindrance of its peace and prosperity ; and the sad cause of much sorrow to those who *watch for their souls as they who must give an account*. Love to God, and one another, in principle and practice, constitutes the essence and evidence of real religion ; and if this be wanting in any man, there is nothing sufficient to prove him to be a partaker of the grace of God. But while faithfulness obliges me, brethren, to take notice of these things, I hope better things of you *and things which accompany salvation*. To conclude :

4. PERMIT me just to remind you, that a time will come when you my friends who are members of this church, and you my

brethren who are the ministers of it, must be separated.—But I mention not this to lessen the pleasure and joy of this day. Joy there is I am persuaded amongst you, that your pastor is continued with you; joy there certainly is to your pastor and you, that God has called his son to labor with him in the gospel amongst you; and great cause for joy there is, that you are in so much harmony and peace amongst yourselves. But there is no settlement here be it ever so agreeable, that will last for ever. Remember therefore, you must part. And let this consideration engage your ministers to watch over you, preach to you, and pray for you with the greatest diligence: and you to hear them attentively, pray for them fervently, and watch over one another carefully. In a word, let what has been laid before you be done with all your might; *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave* *, whither we are all going. But I know not how to close without just reminding you, that though you

* Eccl. ix. 10.

must part from each other here, yet you will all meet again in the great day before the judgment seat of CHRIST. And O with what joy may you hope that meeting will be crowned ! The pleasure that you now have in the worship and ordinances of GOD, in fellowship in the church, in social prayer and watchfulness over one another, is but a *faint resemblance* of the triumphs of *that day*, when ministers and people, when they who teach, and you who are taught by them, shall meet in the presence of your father above, and rejoice for ever before him ! Then oh how will you bless GOD for your ministers, bless him for making them the instruments of your conversion and edification, and making you *their joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus*. I will only add, and with what transport will you join with all the redeemed of the LORD in this grand and delightful song of praise,—*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father ; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever ? Amen :*

* Rev. i. 5, 6.

A P P E N D I X.

*Depingo vobis, viri dignissimi, vitium a perpau-
cis observatum, ideoque maximè periculofum.
CALUMNIA est; pestis linguarum fœda et
perniciosa: quippè ex pessimis in optimos ple-
rumque cadit, inexpectatò vulnerat. Cui vero
grata? vilissimis, ignavis, loquacibus. A qua
verò origine provenit? A mendacio patre,
invidia matre. Nec ipsa quidem sterilis est;
jurgia enim, et odia, non gignit solum, sed fo-
vet. Quænam verò huic morbo antidotus?
INNOCENTIA et patientia; hæc enim tolerat,
illa hebetat.-----Justus Lipsius.*

ENGLISHED THUS.

I will paint out to you, Gentlemen! a vice ob-
serv'd by very few, and therefore the more
dangerous. It is CALUMNY; the foul and
pernicious pest of language: for it most com-
monly falls from the worst of men, upon the

best, and unexpectedly wounds them. But to whom is it acceptable? To the most vile, the idle, the loquacious. What is the origin of it? *ALYE* is its father, *ENVY* its mother. Nor is it indeed barren; for *brawls* and *hatreds*, it both generates and cherishes. But what is the antidote to this disease? *INNOCENCE* and *Patience*; for this bears it, that disappoints it.

A Few weeks ago was published, and the author, (see p. 47 of his letter) *being infinitely above secular considerations, and coveting no man's money, price is. only;---* A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Caleb Evans, occasioned by his curious confession of faith, at his late ordination among the Independent Baptists in Bristol: In which his marvellous creed is consider'd, and his abusive censures of other ministers and churches are exposed. Being a seasonable rebuke to an uncharitable Baptist. By E. Harwood.

THIS letter, I am sorry to be oblig'd to say it, is a mere farrago of *falsehood, misrepresentation, and the most illiberal abuse*. It has rather the appearance of the foam of

insanity, than the remonstrance of christian
 sobriety. In full proof of which I appeal to
 the letter itself, and to my confession which
 occasioned it.---To pretend to reply to such
 a scurrilous libel, which can injure no one
 but its miserable and much to be pity'd au-
 thor, would be a shameful waste of time,
 and an insult upon the public, who do not
 need to be told with what contempt such a
 production ought to be treated. I might
 perhaps afford some diversion to the infidel
 and libertine, was I to sit down and imitate
 the polite liberal style of my Rev. corres-
 pondent, and to address him as familiarly
 as he condescends to address me. See p.
 8, 14, and 39, of his letter. But I can-
 not descend thus low ; or help blushing for
 the man, who sustaining the character of a
 christian minister, is yet capable of thus
 sinking every degree of clerical decorum,
 into the very lowest and most ridiculous buf-
 foonery. As an adversary I *despise* him ;
 but as a weak unhappy man I have a heart
 to *pity* and *pray* for him.

WHETHER I have thrown out the least grain of abuse upon other ministers and other churches, and scolded like a fishwoman, as Mr. H. elegantly expresses it: Whether I claim any right of imposing my creed or system upon any one fellow christian, or plead for any such right on behalf of the society I am connected with: Whether I have given the least intimation that THE BIBLE is by no means sufficient, but is a very lax, incomplete, imperfect, unfinished book: Whether any of these things are true, as Mr. H. has asserted they are, appealing to the great God that he has no design to *misrepresent* any man's creed or character;---I leave every impartial sober man that reads my confession of faith, to judge and determine.

I HAVE indeed mentioned as a reason why a society should be more careful in their choice of a minister, that the sentiments embrac'd by some professing christians are *decried* by others. I have also said a minister's *making a declaration* of his be-

lief in the bible in general, is by no means sufficient to satisfy a society, because this is a declaration which even a papist will make as well as a protestant ; and yet what protestant society would think themselves obliged to chuse a popish minister, merely because he made such a declaration. I have also intimated, that though it is become fashionable to inveigh against all creeds and systems, yet that 'tis very evident the grand rock of offence with these *specious declaimers*, (for their declamations are plausible tho' not conclusive,) is the calvinistic system ; which I esteem the bulwark and glory of the reformation, but which they, being enemies to it, use every *artifice*, and this of crying out against *all* creeds in general is one, to overturn it.

IN short, all I have done is this. I have pleaded for a right of private judgment for myself and fellow christians. I have vindicated the society I serve in their exercise of this right. I have insisted upon it likewise, that no minister is oblig'd to declare by the

rite of ordination, his approbation of a man he disapproves; a truth Mr. H. has had proof of. And lastly, I have deliver'd my own religious sentiments, suggesting the reasons of my belief of them as I go along; and conclude with an acknowledgment of my own imperfection weakness and fallibility, and my entire union of heart with all sincere christians of every denomination, whom I salute as brethren in the LORD.--- And whether there is any thing in all this, that merits such *illiberal abuse*, as Mr. H. hath thought proper to disgorge upon me and the society I serve, upon account of it---Countrymen! friends! fellow christians! judge ye!

As to my *sentiments*, which have produced *such bursts of HOLY indignation* from Mr. H. he well knows they are not novel; and may perhaps remember the time when he himself delivered a written experience (as I have been inform'd) and join'd himself it is certain as a member, to a church that patronizes these *very sentiments infernal* as

they are, and the minister of which church hath published a confession of his belief of them. They make indeed a strange figure as dress'd up by Mr. H. but in their native dress they have no such formidable appearance. Mr. H. represents me as believing that the THREE PERSONS in the God-head are ONE PERSON; see p. 38 of his letter. But whoever reads my confession, will at once see this is a contradiction of his own making, not mine.—According to Mr. H. I believe also that a very *insignificant inconsiderable portion* of the human race shall be saved, a *thousand* it may be *in a city, a hundred in a town, or five or six in a country village*; see p. 15. and p. 40, of his letter. But there is no such idea as this suggested in my confession. I believe that all of every party who have the image and superscription of JESUS upon them shall certainly be saved; and of such I am persuaded there will be found at last, a number which no man will be able to number. But with our *liberal* translator, a *certain*, and an *insignificant inconsiderable* number, are just one and

the same thing ; and the number that shall be saved, it seems, is therefore quite *uncertain* ; God does not know who will be saved, and who will not. According to him I believe likewise that the great God *fastidiously culls five or six out of five or six million of his creatures*, see his letter p. 17. An idea, the very mention of which shocks me. And an idea it is, which in my confession I have expressly disown'd. See p. 34. You will there find, I have explicitly declared that *by the sovereign will and pleasure of God, we are NOT to understand a CAPRICIOUS WANTON display of power, but such a display of it as is perfectly consistent with the highest wisdom, &c.* He further represents me as believing, see p. 17, and p. 48 of his letter, the *reprobation of thousands and myriads of immortal souls to everlasting damnation by a stern and irreversible decree*, and that mankind were *not born to be judged, but judged before they were born*. And yet I have said, it so happens, the *very reverse* of all this ; see my Confession, p. 34. where I have declar'd my firm belief, *that*

no man shall be call'd to an account for the abuse of privileges he never enjoy'd, but shall have a most fair and equitable trial, and be condemned NOT by any ARBITRARY DECREE, but for the wilful violation of known duty, &c. He would also fain insinuate that I believe the eternal damnation of *sweet innocent babes* for old Adam's sin, see p. 44, of his letter. But I never entertain'd such a thought for a moment. I have only intimated, that from the calamities they are evidently expos'd to, and the propensities to sin they so early discover, it is very evident they are consider'd and treated as branches of a corrupt stock, and partake with their progenitor in the consequences of his apostacy. See my confession, p. 30. My correspondent endeavours further to expose me for saying that the death of CHRIST was a vicarious atoning sacrifice for the sins of his *chosen* people. And he might with equal propriety have expos'd CHRIST himself for saying, *I lay down my life for the sheep*, John x. 15. And I freely confess whether there be *any* sense in which CHRIST

died for every individual of mankind or not, I can't possibly see how he could die as an *atoning* sacrifice, for those whom God knew would die in their sins, and whose guilt will therefore never be aton'd. And as to those indefinite expressions, *all, every man*, i. e. every man that shall be saved, the *world*, &c. even Dr. *Taylor* himself when treating of original sin, p. 104, &c. can interpret much stronger expressions than these, such as NO FLESH, NO NOT ONE, &c. &c. as intending only a *great number*, and persons of *all sorts*. But with Mr. H. any thing by which he may possibly render me odious to those who differ from me in their sentiments, is greedily catch'd at. Methinks however it should have been some check upon the fury of my Rev. antagonist, to have read (as doubtless he has read) the following candid acknowledgment in favour of Calvinism, in the celebrated Confessional. See p. 287, and 288, of the 2d edition. "One thing, however, I beg leave just to mention in favour of the *Calvinists*; namely, that some very eminent

men of the present generation have gone a great way in their *philosophical disquisitions*, towards vindicating the predestinarian theology of these our forefathers. And, when it is consider'd that so able a writer as *Dr. Clayton*, the late Bishop of *Clogher*, could find no other way of establishing the free-will or free-agency of man, but by putting such limitations, as he has done, upon the prescience of GOD, NO REASONABLE man would hastily conclude, that the *Calvinists* have nothing material to say for themselves."

AND I should have thought his sublime veneration for *Arianism* might have been somewhat abated, by the sermons preach'd at lady Moyer's lecture, and lately publish'd by his learned and ingenious friend, as he affects to call *Dr. Dawson*, who in those discourses shews the inconsistency and absurdity of this motley scheme.

I CAN'T help being *astonish'd* at Mr. H's. hinting at our late dispute in the *Bristol*

Journal, and his talking to me of *humiliating* acknowledgments. Surely this gentleman's memory must strangely fail him, if he has forgot *his own* humiliations upon that occasion; with a view of which, he may however, if he pleases, still gratify the public. *Sat verbum sapienti.* And as this LEARNED man is so fond of scraps of Latin, I would present him with one bit more. *Perit verbum, litera Scripta manet.*

I HAVE only to add, that as Christians of all denominations in this town, were perfectly peaceable, and liv'd in friendship with one another till Mr. Harwood came amongst us; so I flatter myself the same harmony will continue to subsist, notwithstanding the unworthy attempts of this man to disturb it.

For my own part, there is nothing I more fervently wish, next to the enjoyment of peace with GOD, than to live peaceably with all men.

Bristol, Nov. 9. 1767. CALEB EVANS.



f
-
t
l
-
I
t
y
S.